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RENAISSANCE

1 / THE UPROOTED

EUROPE COMICS

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EUROPE COMICS

"THE PARIS-BERLIN HIGHWAY WILL STAY OPEN!" BROTHERS AND SISTERS, THAT IS WHAT THE GERMAN CHANCELLOR SAID BEFORE LEAVING BERLIN AND GOING INTO HIDING WHO KNOWS WHERE!

HERR CHANCELLOR KEPT QUIET ON THE SHUTDOWN OF EUROPE'S LAST NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS, AND HE DIDN'T COMMENT ON THE MELTDOWN OF THE TRICASTIN REACTOR.

THE ALLIANCE OF NORDIC STATES IS NOT RESPONDING!

THE SAHARA HAS BEEN DECLARED UNLIVABLE, THOUGH NOT FOR THOSE DAMN SCORPIONS... THE ITALIANS ARE UP TO THEIR ANKLES IN SEAWATER, AND...

...THEY'RE GROWING AGITATED OVER THE ALPS! FOR NOW, WE AND THE SWISS ARE REFUSING TO REDIVIDE TERRITORY IN THE MOUNTAINS!

THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT CHANGES LOCATION EVERY FOUR DAYS, IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND THEM, TOTAL PARANOIA!

THE RECENT FLOODING OF THE SEINE WILL RESULT IN FEWER DEATHS THAN LAST YEAR BUT CAUSE MORE DAMAGE!

1

IN AMERICA, FIGHTING HAS BROKEN OUT AGAIN BETWEEN CALIFORNIA AND OREGON, WHICH HAS ALLIED ITSELF WITH NEVADA...

IN TEXAS, NO ONE HAS TAKEN RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MOST RECENT OIL FIELD BOMBINGS, BUT AUSTIN ACCUSES THE SECESSIONIST WAR MACHINES...

A FLU EPIDEMIC IS RAVAGING CHINA...

THE ISLANDS OF OCEANIA THAT ARE STILL ABOVE WATER HAVE OPENED FIRE ON REFUGEES...

BROTHERS, SISTERS, HUMANITY IS IN DECLINE...

PEOPLE OF PARIS, CONTRARY TO YESTERDAY'S ANNOUNCEMENT, THE FEVER HAS NOT YET BEEN ERADICATED.

WE CONTINUE TO GRIEVE THIS WEEK FOR SEVERAL BROTHERS AND SISTERS LOST TO THE EPIDEMIC...

THE DELIVERY OF VACCINES WILL...

THOSE WERE MY LAST BATTERIES.

WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE...

THE BOAT WILL BE READY IN A FEW DAYS, HÉLÈNE... I JUST HAVE TO FIND A FEW MORE PARTS FOR THE RUDDER AND ASSEMBLE THEM!

3

I DON'T WANT TO GO TO THE MOUNTAINS, I HATE THE GIRL THERE!

CHLOE. HER NAME IS CHLOE AND SHE'S YOUR COUSIN. YOU'LL BECOME FRIENDS EVENTUALLY!

WHY DON'T WE GO TO MALI? THAT'S OUR HOME, TOO!

THAT'S MY GREAT-GRANDFATHER'S HOME. I'VE NEVER BEEN, YOU KNOW THAT. I TOLD YOU ABOUT IT SO YOU'D KNOW YOUR ROOTS, BUT YOU, YOUR DAD, AND I ARE FROM SAINT-OUEN JUST OUTSIDE PARIS.

MAIRIE DU 7E ARRONDISSEMENT

HÉLÈNE, LUC, WE HAVE TWO CASES OF FEVER IN THE EAST PILLAR. NOBODY LEAVES THE TOWER! WE'RE PUTTING THIS PLACE UNDER QUARANTINE!

4

ARE YOU KIDDING, JACQUES? WE LEAVE PARIS ON WEDNESDAY!

YOU'LL HAVE TO TELL THEM THAT!

HUH?

WHAT? WHO IS THAT?

THE EPIDEMIC CONTROL BRIGADE. THEY'RE ISOLATING THE TOWER AND BURNING EVERYTHING AROUND. WE'RE STUCK!

IT'LL BE A MIRACLE IF WE DON'T ALL GET SICK!

LOOK!

?

?!

5

THERE'S A FIRE AT THE PETROL KING'S CASTLE! CALL THE FIREFIGHTERS!

THE PRINCESS IS THERE!

SHE LIVES IN DALLAS?

YEAH, AND THE BIG CRAZY ROBOTS ARE BREAKING EVERYTHING!

LIKE IN REAL LIFE?

WORSE THAN IN REAL LIFE. THESE ARE MEGA ROBOTS!

WHERE'S THE PRINCE?

HE DOESN'T LOVE HER ANYMORE, OR HE'S LOOKING FOR HIS SWORD TO KILL THE MACHINES...

WHY ISN'T MOM LEAVING WITH US?

SHE HAS TO STAY TO HELP THE FIREFIGHTERS...

LET'S GO, GIRLS! IT'S TIME!

FIVE MORE MINUTES!

MOM'S WAITING. COME ON!

6

TEXAS, NEAR FORTH WORTH. YEAR: 2084.

YOU'LL COME SOON?

I PROMISE!

IN THE CAR, GIRLS.

I'LL BE ALRIGHT... ONCE WE GET THIS UNDER CONTROL, I'LL COME JOIN YOU. BUT YOU NEED TO PROTECT THE GIRLS AND GET THEM AWAY. YOU HAVE TO--

TAKE THAT DAMN BOAT WITHOUT YOU. I KNOW...

YURI...

LIZ! THE PROBES SHOW WELL 3 CATCHING FIRE! TWENTY METERS UNDERGROUND!

COMING.

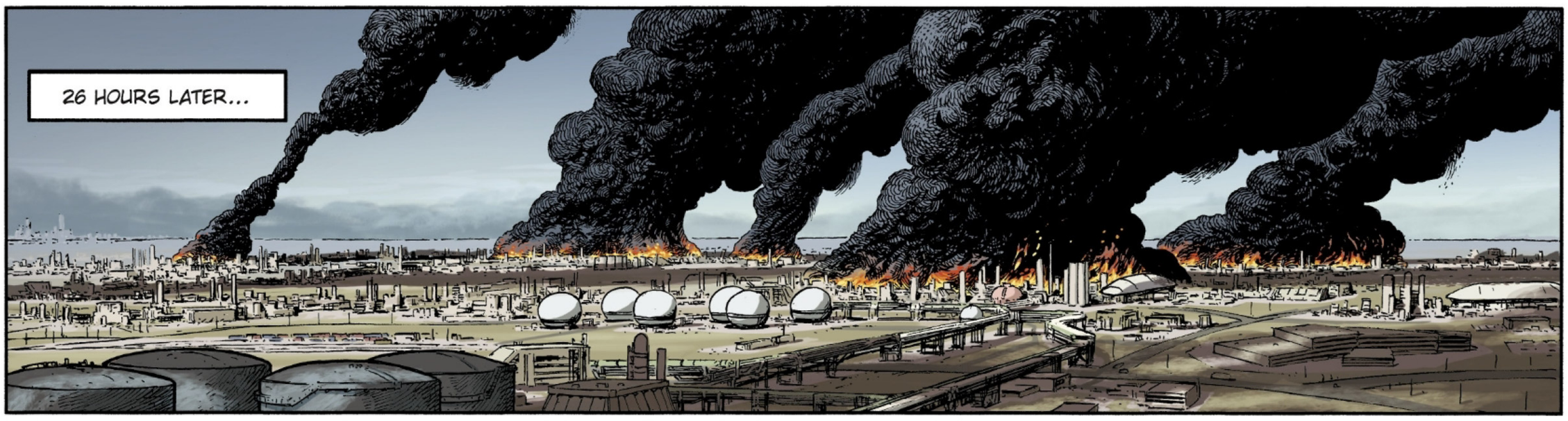
HELLO, LIZ.

BATTERY AT 100% CHARGE. WILL LAST FOR 60 HOURS OR AN AVERAGE DISTANCE OF 6,000 KM.

WHAT IS YOUR DESTINATION?

HELL!

I DON'T HAVE COORDINATES FOR "HELL." PLEASE BE SPECIFIC.


26 HOURS LATER...

POLICE

WE'RE DONE FOR THIS TIME. WELL 3 IS GOING TO EXPLODE AND SPREAD THE FIRE ACROSS THE ENTIRE OIL FIELD. THEN THE GAS DEPOSITS WILL GO, AND THE EXPLOSIONS WILL RAISE THE TEMPERATURE SO HIGH EVEN THE HUMAN TORCH COULDN'T HANDLE IT!
THE WHAT?
THE HUMAN TORCH, ONE OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR! YOU NEVER READ ANY CLASSIC COMICS?
NOT SUPER INTO THE 20TH CENTURY, SORRY! LATELY I'M INTO JACK LONDON!

WE'VE LOST, SAMMY. I'M GOING TO ORDER A RETREAT BEFORE WE'RE SURROUNDED BY FIRE...
WE FOUGHT WELL, LIZ. I DON'T KNOW IF WE'LL HAVE TIME TO GET FAR ENOUGH AWAY...
LIZ, SAM! COME QUICK!

I'M NOT GETTING ANY DATA FROM THE SATELLITES, BUT GROUND RADAR IS STILL WORKING! WE HAVE COMPANY! LESS THAN 20 MILES, COMING FROM THE EAST...

MACHINES?

HAS TO BE, GIVEN THE SIGNAL... I'D SAY THREE HUGE COMBAT BOTS... COULD BE HUMANS INSIDE!

FIRE DEPT.

DAMN IT, HAVEN'T THOSE DIRTBAGS MESSED WITH US ENOUGH? ARE THEY HAVING REGRETS AND BRINGING BUCKETS OF WATER?

HOLD ON SAM, WE DON'T KNOW ANYTHING FOR SURE. THEY COULD BE MACHINES PILOTED BY NORTHERN SECESSIONISTS OR INTELLIGENT, AUTONOMOUS SYSTEMS!

WHAT DOES IT MATTER?

IT MATTERS!

THEY'RE BLOCKING OUR ONLY WAY OUT OF HERE...

IF THEY'RE NORTHERNERS, WE HAVE A CHANCE TO NEGOTIATE. BUT IF WE'RE DEALING WITH MACHINES ON PATROL, THEY'LL HAVE NO MORE EMPATHY FOR HUMANKIND THAN I HAD FOR MY FIRST CASE OF CRABS!

THIS IS LIZ HAMILTON, CHIEF ENGINEER, CALLING ALL TEAMS. REGROUP AT POINT OMEGA FOR AN EMERGENCY EVACUATION. ABANDON ALL FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT AND BRING ONLY YOUR PROTECTIVE GEAR.

LIZ, OUR FAMILIES ARE CALLING, THERE ARE THREE COMBAT MACHINES NEAR THE VILLAGE!

THAT'S RIGHT! WE'RE HEADED THERE!

I SHOULD'VE KNOWN WHEN I SAW YOUR HUSBAND AND DAUGHTERS LEAVE YESTERDAY...

YOU GOT MY MESSAGE JUST LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE, MARY... I TOLD YOU TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR PEOPLE. WE'RE AT WAR!

WE'LL DIE IF WE STAY HERE. WELL 3 WILL BLOW SOON AND IT'LL ALL BE OVER!

M-22

V-418

THERE'S NO MIRACLE COMING AND YOU KNOW IT! COME ON, LET'S MOVE!

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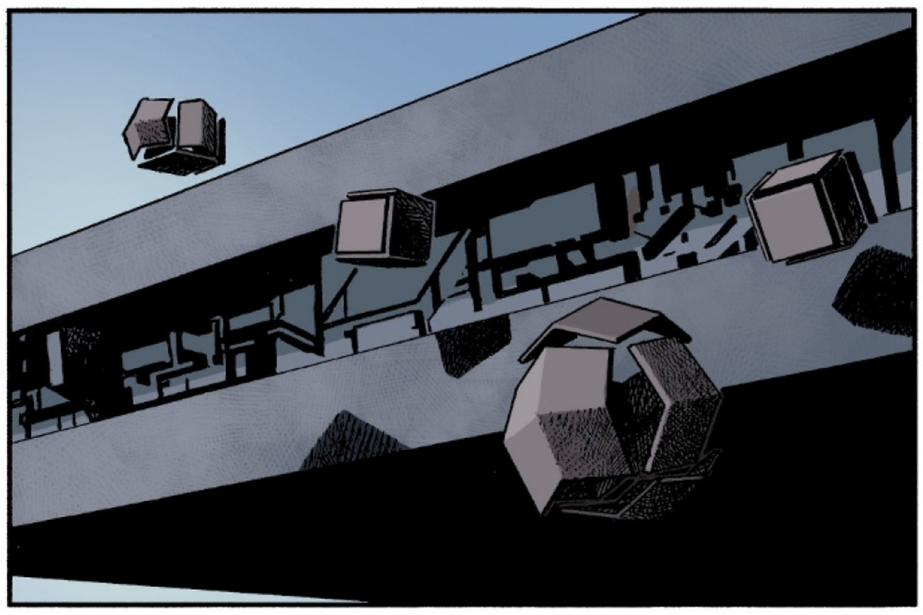

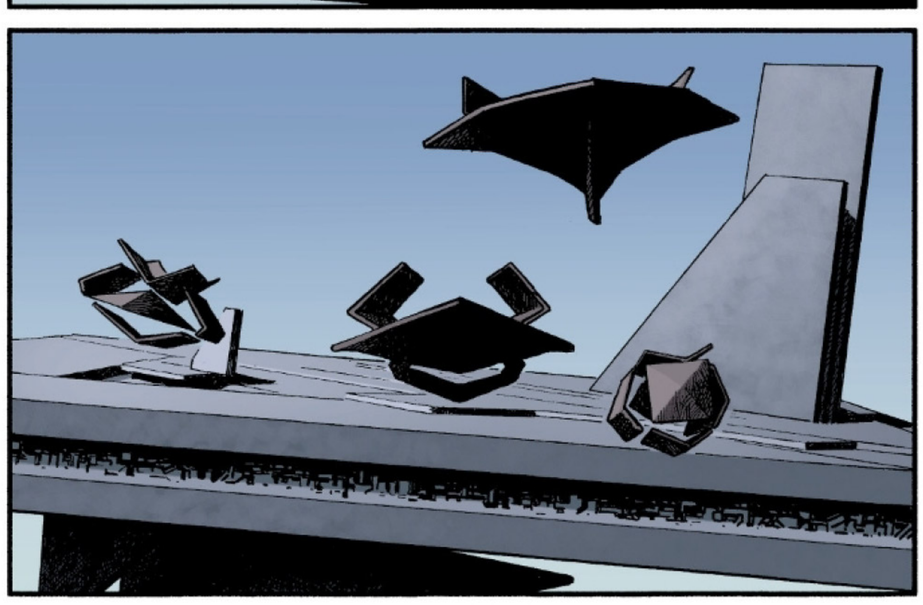

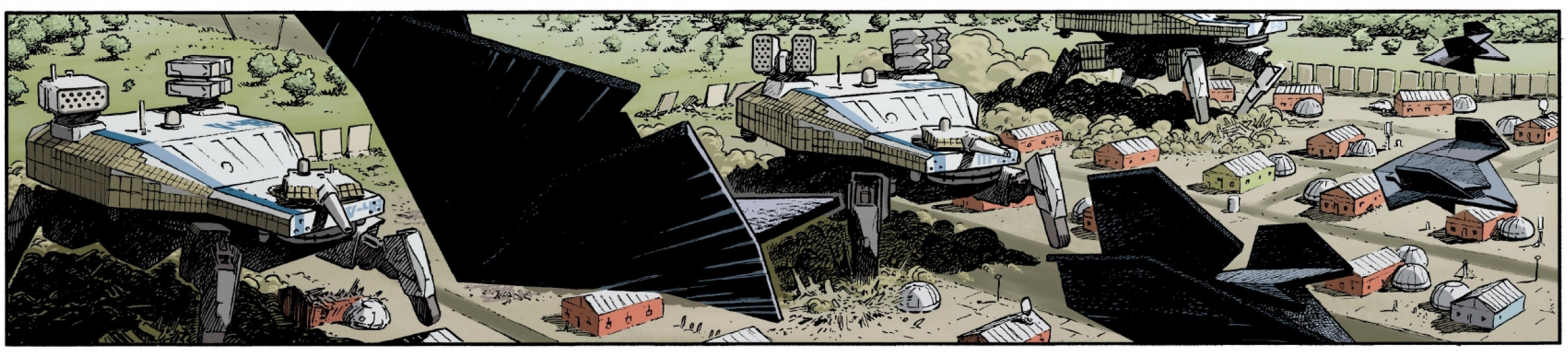

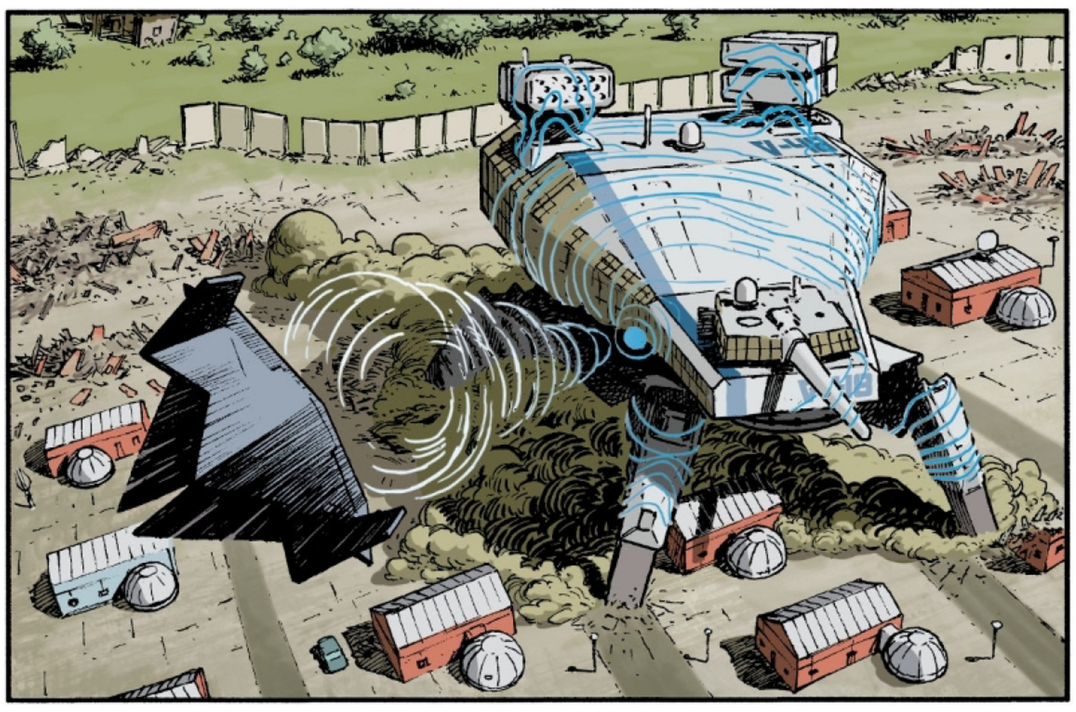

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SWÄNN. MY NAME IS SWÄNN.

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MY REAL NAME, LIKE THAT OF OTHERS OF MY KIND, IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR EARTHLINGS TO PRONOUNCE, SO THE LANGUAGE DIVISION GAVE US SIMPLER ONES. NAMES MEANT TO EVOKE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THINGS ON EARTH.

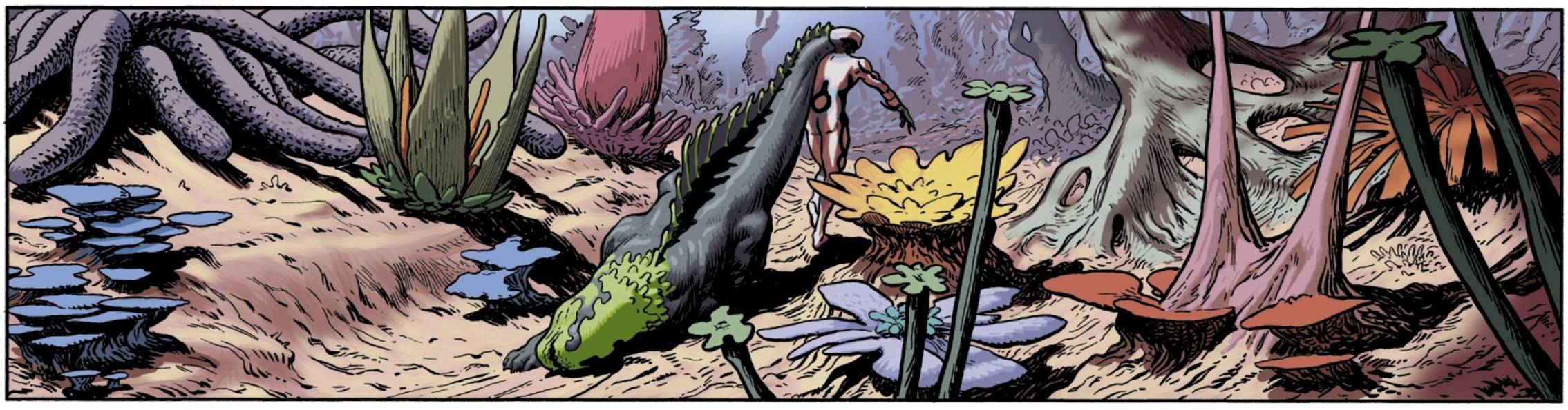
I WAS BORN ON NÄKÄN, IN THE KÄNALÄ REGION, INTO ONE OF THE EIGHT CLANS OF THE FEDERATION OF FORESTERS.

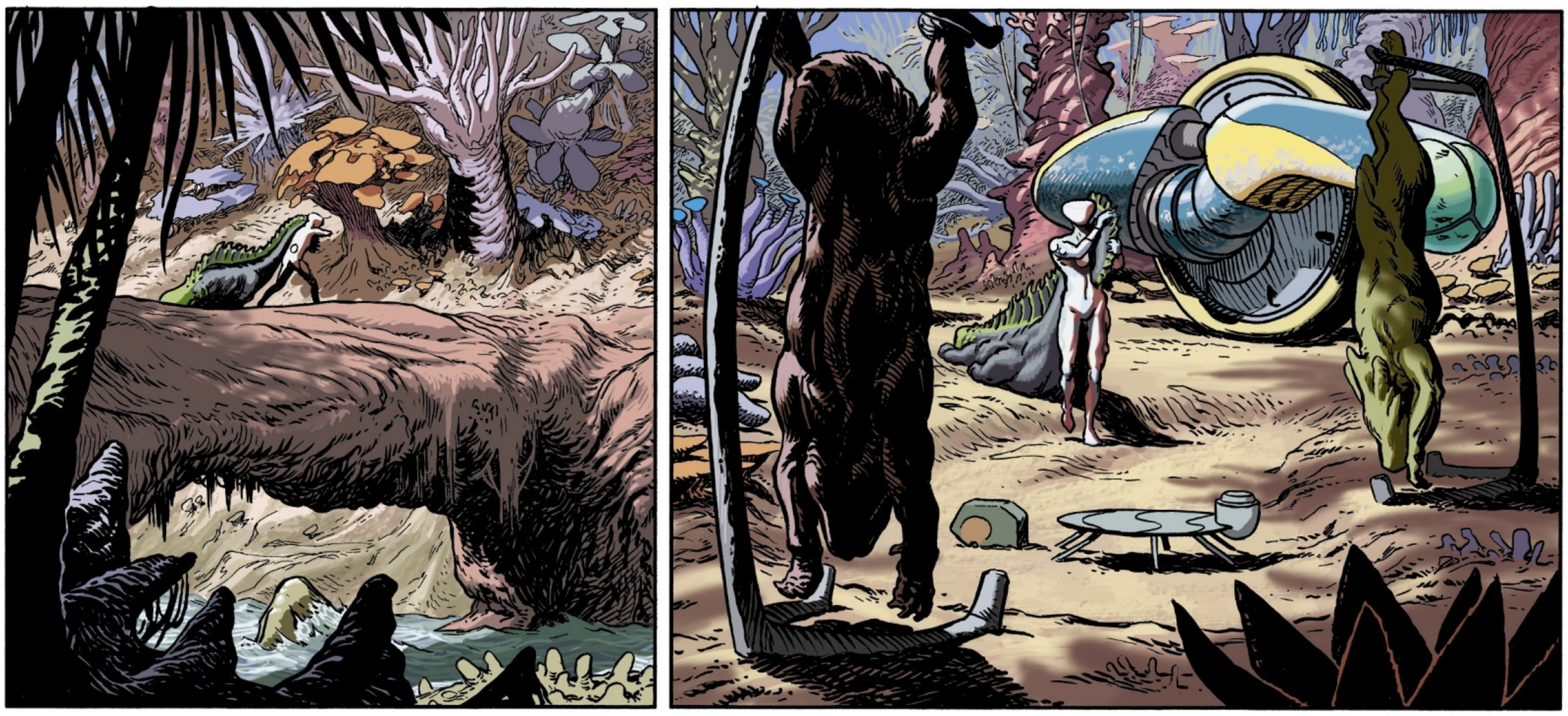
WE'VE BEEN HUNTERS FOR A THOUSAND YEARS.

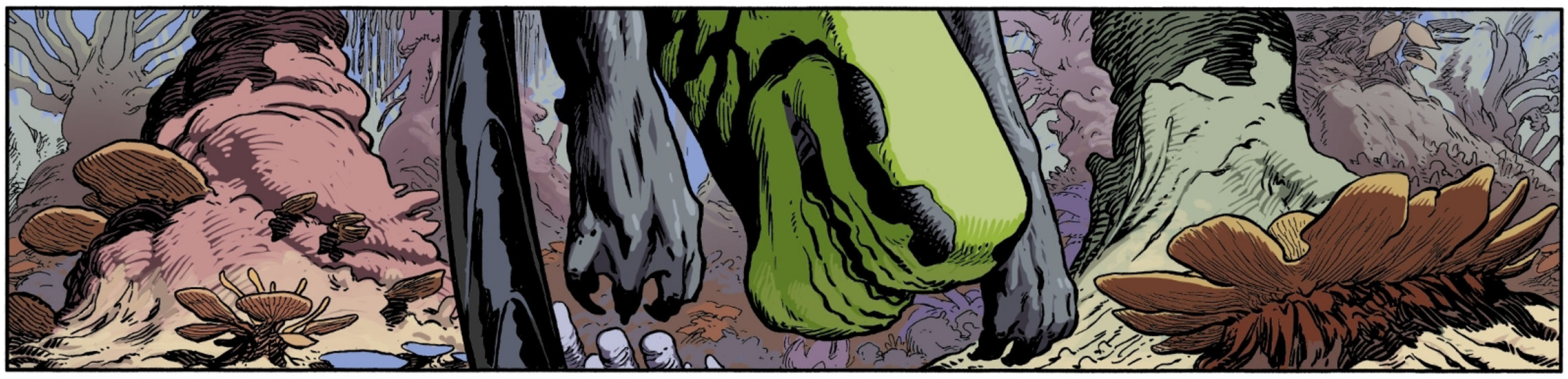
EASY TO KILL WITH OUR IONIC WEAPONS WHEN WE STALK THEM DURING THE SAP SEASON.

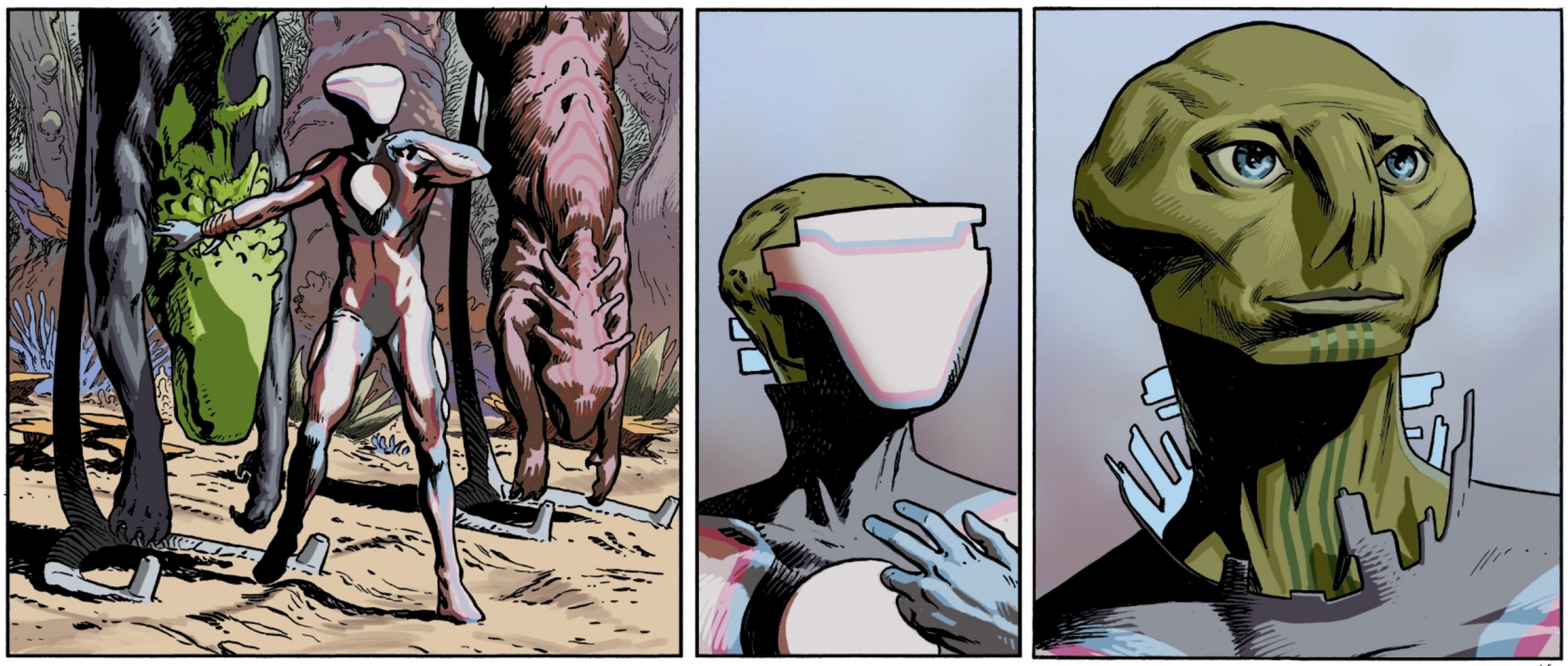
ADULT MALE SÄBERER.

BUT KÄNALÄ CLAN TRADITION REQUIRES A HUNTER TO BE CLOSE ENOUGH TO SMELL THE THREE BEASTS HE MUST KILL ON THE EVE OF HIS WEDDING.









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I CAN SEE YOUR HUNT WAS FRUITFUL! THE RETURN ROUTE IS SET IF YOU WANT TO SLEEP. I'M GOING TO STOP AT FOÄ STATION TO REFUEL ON HYDROGEN. I CAN MAKE A RESERVATION IF YOU WANT TO EAT THERE.

I'LL DRIVE! AND I'D LIKE TO HEAR THE NEWS!

LOCAL, PLANETARY, OR UNIVERSAL NEWS?

WHATEVER YOU THINK IS IMPORTANT.

THEN YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE TRICONTINENTAL COUNCIL BEGAN LAST NIGHT. AFTER THE DEBATE, WHICH WILL LAST AT LEAST TWO WEEKS, DELEGATES FROM THE 15 FEDERATIONS WILL VOTE ON WHETHER TO INTERVENE IN A WORLD OUTSIDE OUR SYSTEM.

ARE YOU TELLING ME THAT I'M GOING TO BE SENT TO SOME DISTANT STAR SYSTEM I ONLY VAGUELY REMEMBER HEARING ABOUT IN SCHOOL?

SINCE FORESTERS HANDLE ALL EXTERNAL MATTERS, YOU MIGHT BE CALLED ON FOR THE MISSION, SWÄNN, IF THERE'S TO BE AN INTERVENTION. BUT AS A DOCTOR, SÄTIE IS MORE LIKELY TO BE MOBILIZED...

HELL OF A TRIP FOR THOSE OF US WHO'VE NEVER LEFT NÄKÄN! HOW MANY PLANETS WILL THIS EXPEDITION INVOLVE?

JUST ONE, A TWIN TO OUR OWN PLANET, ITS INHABITANTS CALL IT "EARTH."

THERE ARE FORMS OF INTELLIGENT LIFE, WITH SEVERAL ADVANCED CIVILIZATIONS. THEY'VE SENT PROBES INTO SPACE BUT HAVE NO AWARENESS OF THE TRUE UNIVERSE AND NO CONTACT WITH OTHER WORLDS.

PERFECT, IN THREE OR FOUR CENTURIES, THEY'LL BE ABLE TO JOIN THE COMPLEX. WHAT'S THEIR PROBLEM?

GLOBAL MASS EXTINCTION!

THAT'S NOT ENOUGH TO JUSTIFY AN INTERVENTION.

WHENCE THE DEBATE. I'LL PREPARE A LITTLE SUMMARY FOR YOU. WE ALMOST WENT THERE 120 YEARS AGO, OR 140 OF THEIR YEARS.

THE ELECTROMAGNETIC BARRIER IS UP. ARE THEY CLOSED OR WHAT?!

YOU'LL HAVE TO ACTIVATE YOUR IDENTIFIER, SON!

SORRY, I'VE BEEN OFFLINE FOR THREE DAYS...

19

MILITARY?

YES, I'M A FORESTER. WELL, IF THAT STILL MEANS ANYTHING NOWADAYS. I LIVE IN TOWN LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE! NO OFFENSE!

INJURED?

JUST A SPRAIN. I TOOK DOWN A RATHER TOUGH SÄBERER THIS MORNING.

WITH A BLADE, EH? FOR A GUY FROM THE CITY YOU SEEM PRETTY ATTACHED TO TRADITION! BUT TELL ME: AREN'T YOU A LITTLE YOUNG TO BE GETTING MARRIED?

WHAT CAN I SAY, MY GIRLFRIEND IS IN THE MILITARY, TOO. GETTING MARRIED INCREASES OUR CHANCES OF A JOINT DEPLOYMENT. AS FOR TRADITION, IT'S AN EXCUSE TO SPEND SOME TIME IN THE FOREST...

YOU BEEN FOLLOWING THE NEWS? IT SEEMS LIKE THE COUNCIL MIGHT SEND YOU TWO ON AN INTERSTELLAR HONEYMOON!

ARE THEY SERIOUS?

ACCORDING TO VARIOUS NETWORKS, IT'LL BE A LONG DEBATE AND THE OUTCOME IS UNCERTAIN. SO YES, THEY'RE SERIOUS!

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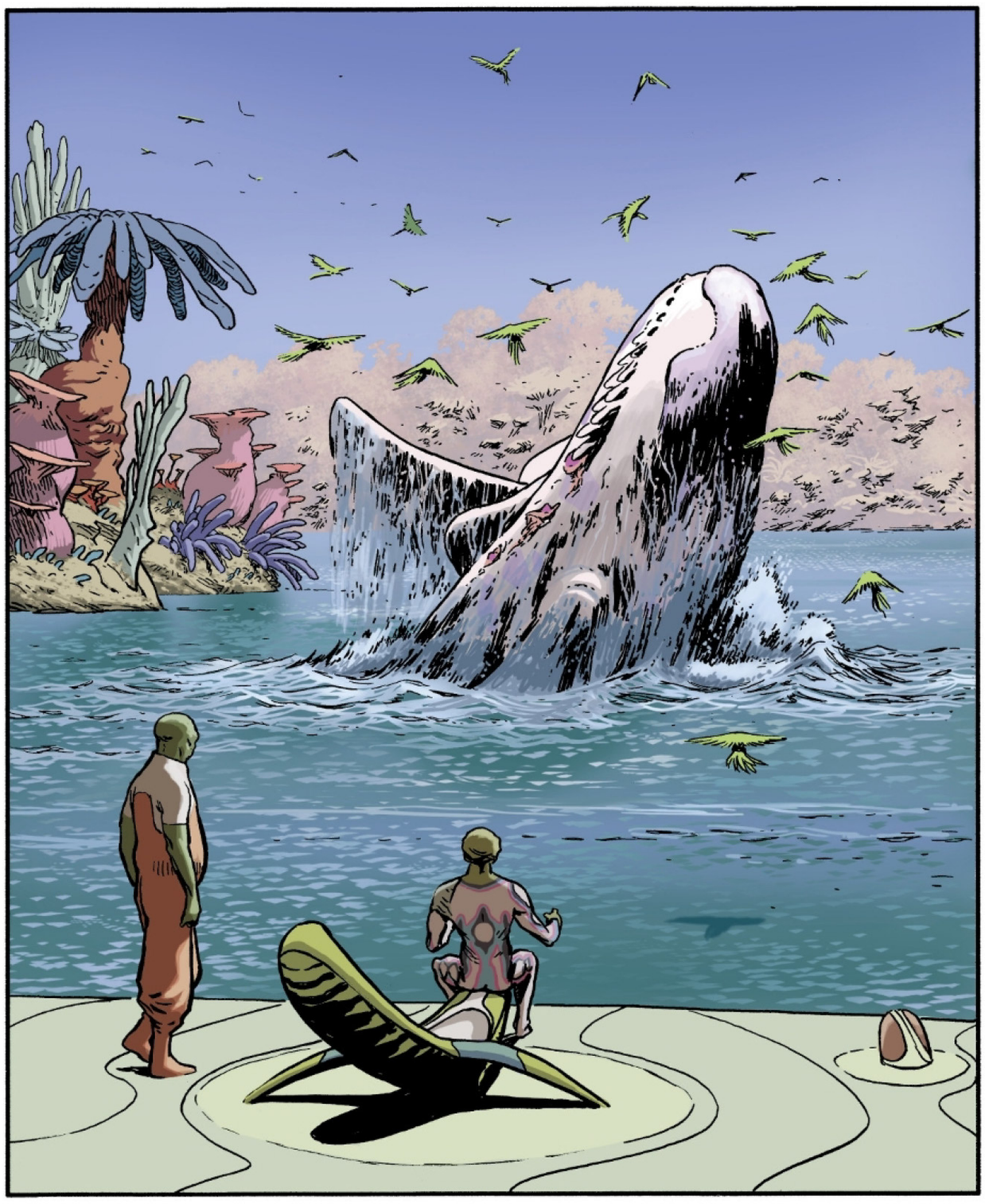
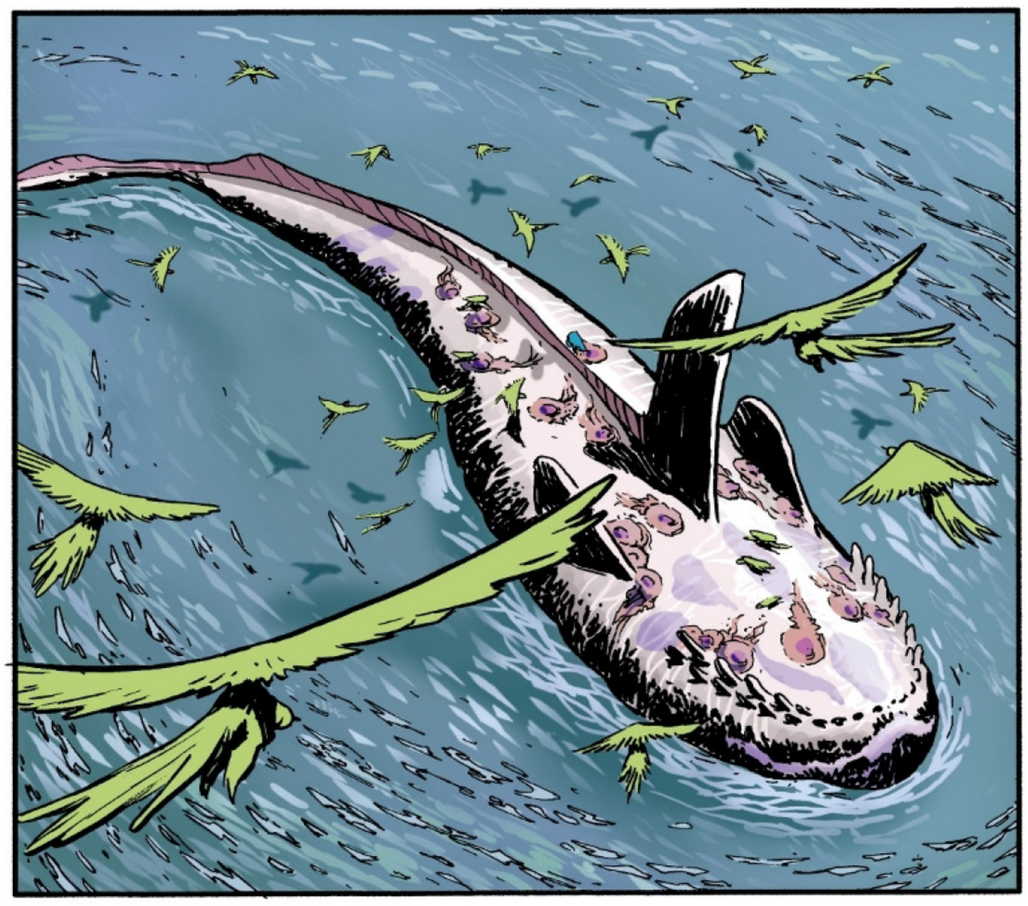
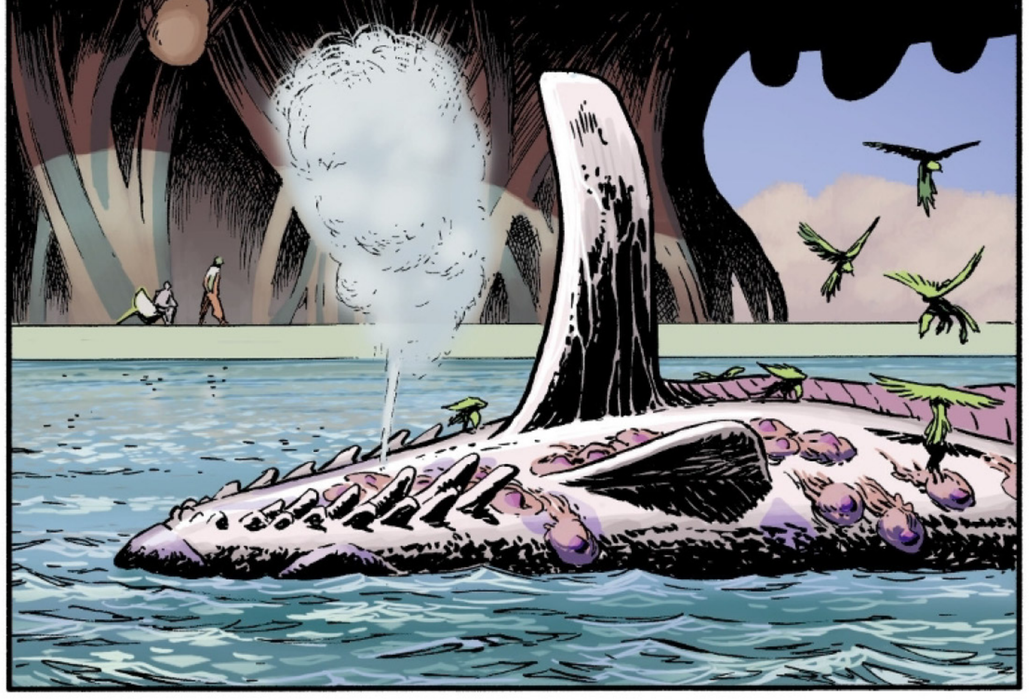




YOU'RE LUCKY, AN OFFERING OF JELLYFISH TO THE BIRDS IS A RARE SIGHT.

YOUR HYDROGEN TANK IS FULL, BUT STAY AS LONG AS YOU LIKE, FRIEND.



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YOU HAVE A MESSAGE: SÄTIE WILL MEET YOU AT THE SEQUOIAS TONIGHT FOR THE FINAL PREPARATIONS. NO NEED TO CALL HER BACK, SHE'LL BE WORKING ALL DAY.

OK!

HOW WAS THE HUNT, FORESTER?

I'M GLAD I DID IT!

I KNOW!

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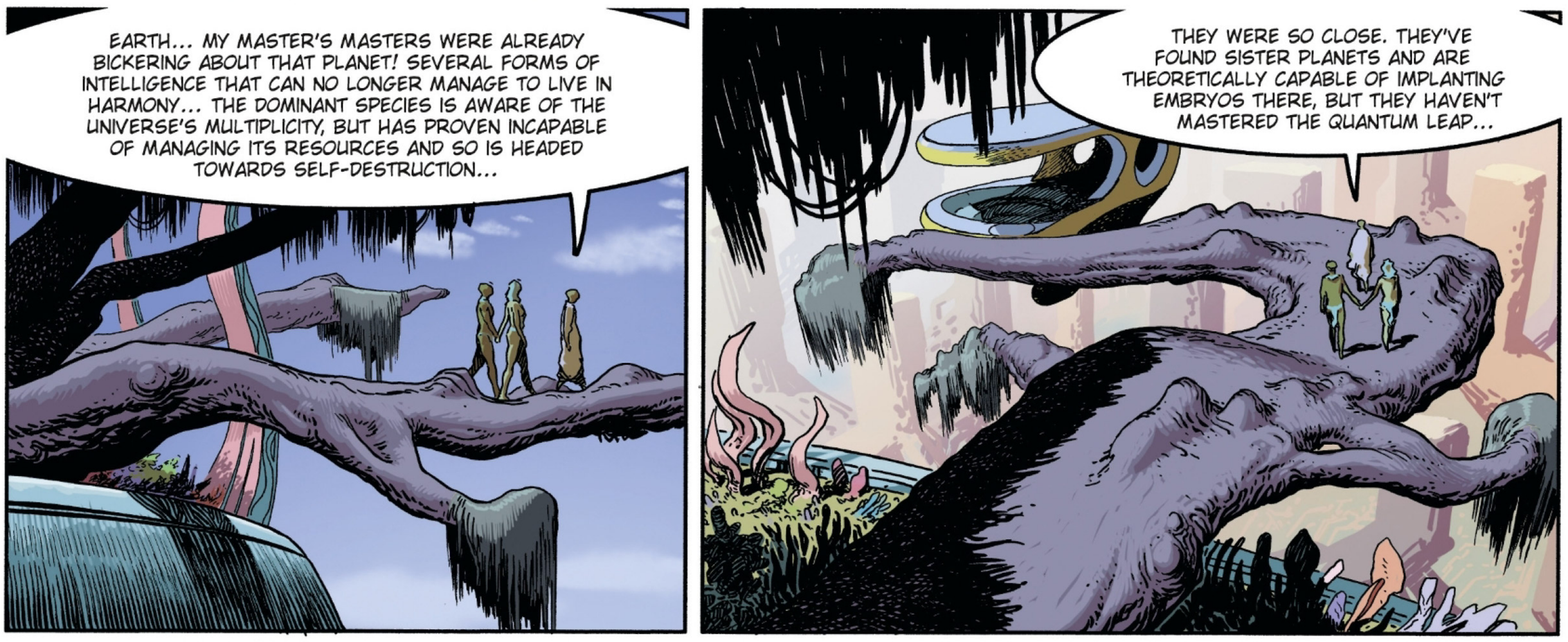
SÄTIE AND I CHOSE ONE OF THE SIMPLEST AND MOST POPULAR RITES OF UNION...

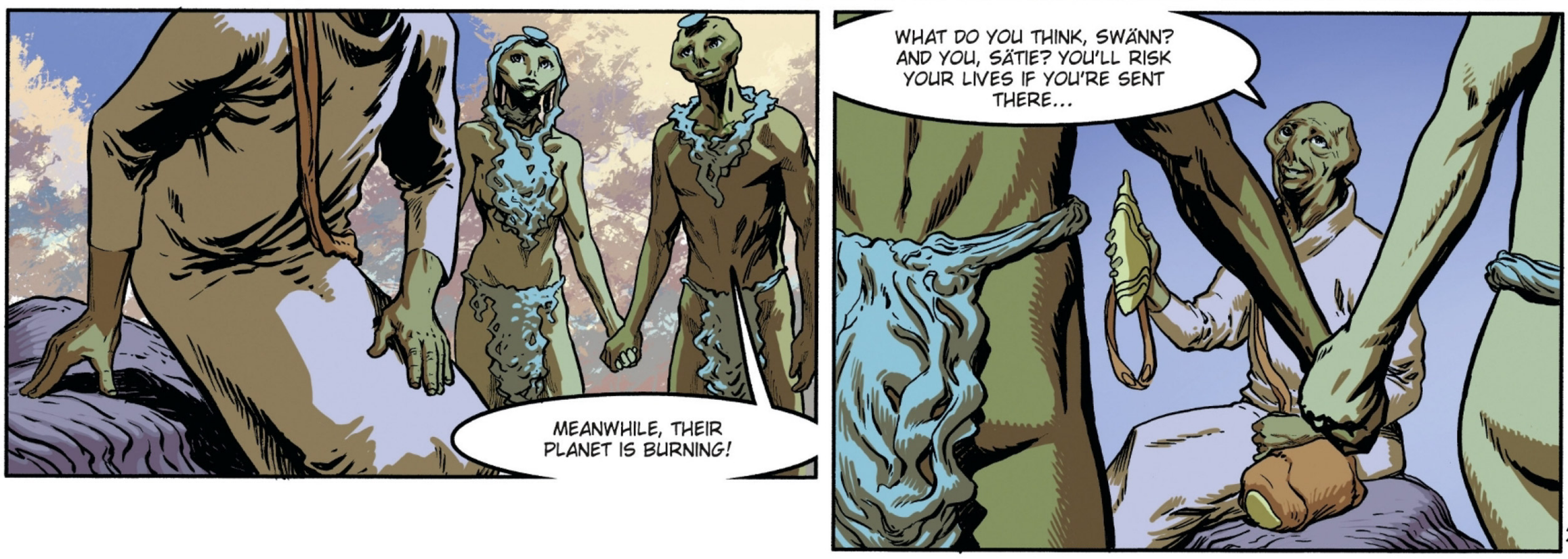
THE CEREMONY CONSISTS OF TAKING A WALK IN THE COMPANY OF A SCHOLAR.

THE FLOATING GARDENS OF KÄNALÄ. THIS CENTURIES-OLD WONDER WAS BUILT BY THE FORESTERS AND THE NOURISHERS AS A SIGN OF PEACE BETWEEN THE TWO CLANS. WE ALWAYS DREAMED OF MARRYING, LIVING, AND ONE DAY DYING HERE.

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL PLACE TO SEAL YOUR UNION... WILL YOU STAY ON THIS CONTINENT?
I LOVE KÄNALÄ! I'VE TRAVELED TO ALL THREE CONTINENTS, BUT I ALWAYS ENJOY COMING HOME.

I HAVE TO ADMIT, I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO HUNT ON TORGHON! BUT WITH WHAT A QUANTUM LEAP COSTS, I'LL MAKE DO WITH IMMERSION BLOCKS...
IF WE'RE MOBILIZED TO SERVE THE COMPLEX, WE'LL HAVE TO LEAVE, THOUGH.


EARTH... MY MASTER'S MASTERS WERE ALREADY BICKERING ABOUT THAT PLANET! SEVERAL FORMS OF INTELLIGENCE THAT CAN NO LONGER MANAGE TO LIVE IN HARMONY... THE DOMINANT SPECIES IS AWARE OF THE UNIVERSE'S MULTIPLICITY, BUT HAS PROVEN INCAPABLE OF MANAGING ITS RESOURCES AND SO IS HEADED TOWARDS SELF-DESTRUCTION...
THEY WERE SO CLOSE. THEY'VE FOUND SISTER PLANETS AND ARE THEORETICALLY CAPABLE OF IMPLANTING EMBRYOS THERE, BUT THEY HAVEN'T MASTERED THE QUANTUM LEAP...


MEANWHILE, THEIR PLANET IS BURNING!
WHAT DO YOU THINK, SWÄNN? AND YOU, SÄTIE? YOU'LL RISK YOUR LIVES IF YOU'RE SENT THERE...

I'M SCARED, AND I DON'T WANT TO GO, BUT THE OATHS I'VE TAKEN ARE STRONGER THAN MY FEARS. I'M A DOCTOR. I'LL DO MY JOB AND HONOR THE COMMITMENTS OF THE FORESTERS.

I DON'T THINK THE COUNCIL WILL DECIDE TO INTERVENE IN THAT SYSTEM... THOUSANDS OF SPECIES DISAPPEAR EVERY DAY, WHY SAVE THIS ONE OVER ANY OTHER?

THEY'VE DEVELOPED HIGHLY SUBTLE POETICS AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION. A FRIEND WHO HAS BEEN STUDYING THEM FOR A LONG TIME SAYS WE COULD LEARN A LOT FROM THEM...

THE TRIP WOULD CLEARLY BE GOOD TRAINING IN TERMS OF EMERGENCY MEDICINE AND MILITARY SURGERY!

BUT CAN WE HELP THEM WITHOUT SUBJUGATING THEM?

GOOD QUESTION, SWÄNN. I DON'T KNOW IF THE ANSWER LIES IN MEDICINE OR POLITICS. SOMETIMES ONE MUST DEAL WITH THE MOST URGENT MATTERS FIRST...

WE FORESTERS WERE NEVER *GOOD* POETS!

I LIKE POLITICS. I'M COMMITTED TO THE CAUSE!

YOUR LOVED ONES ARE WAITING TO CELEBRATE WITH YOU. YOU HAVE MY FULL, UNRESERVED CONSENT.

SOMETIMES, AT THE END OF THE CONVERSATION, THE SCHOLAR DECLARES HIMSELF AGAINST THE MARRIAGE. IN SUCH CASES, THE COUPLE IS FREE TO MARRY, BUT HAS BEEN WARNED!

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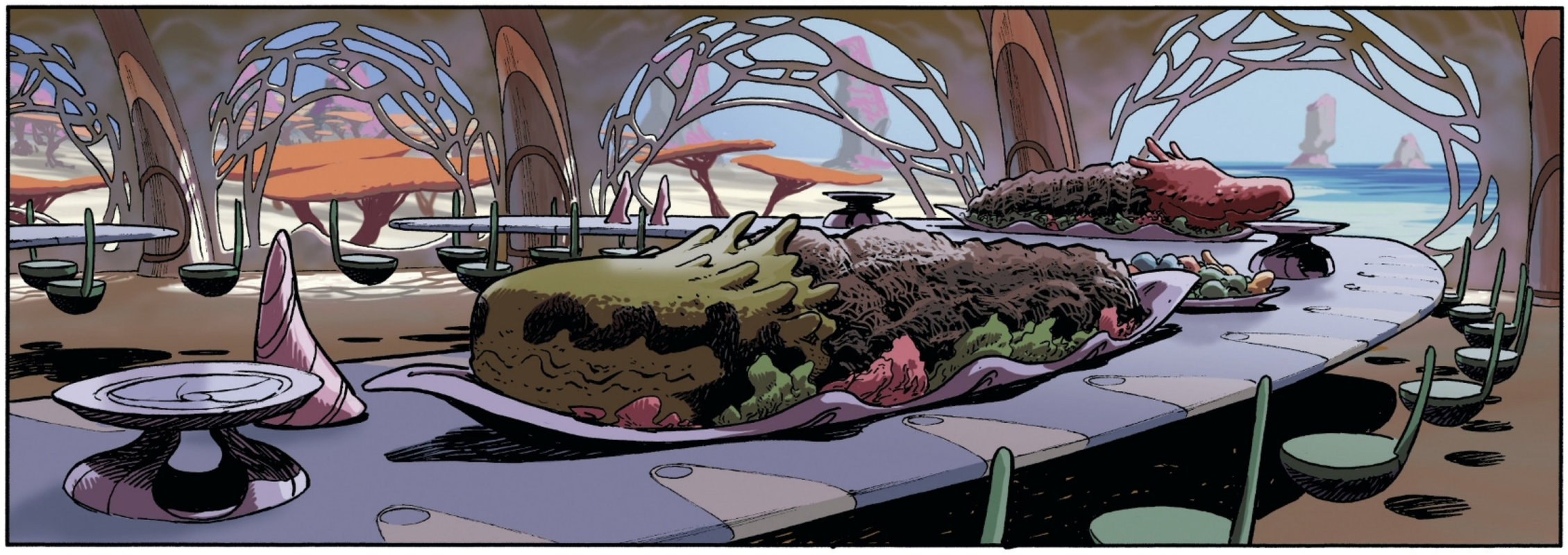
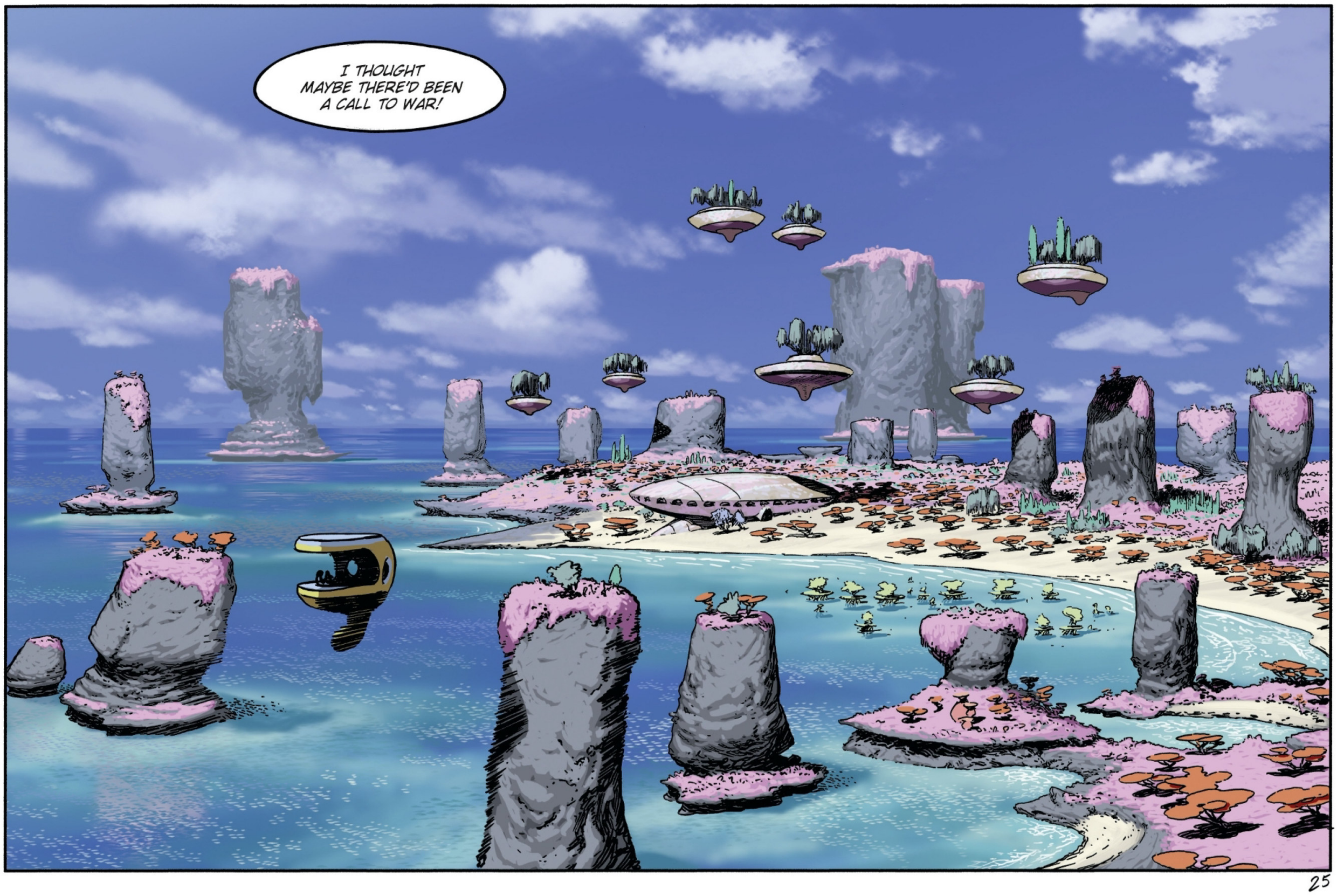


THEY'RE HERE!
FINALLY!


I THOUGHT MAYBE THERE'D BEEN A CALL TO WAR!

WHAT A PLEASURE!

A JUMP TO NÄKÄN IS ALWAYS A PLEASURE, SWÄNN. AND YOUR PARENTS WERE VERY PERSUASIVE. THEY WENT ALL THE WAY BACK TO OUR YEARS AT SCHOOL IN KÄNALÄ AND YOUR FATHER'S GLIDER THAT I NEVER ADMITTED TO BREAKING!

BECAUSE MY SON HAS TAKEN RESPECT FOR TRADITION TO THE POINT OF RISKING HIS LIFE IN ORDER TO SERVE US A SÄBERER AND TWO SEYMURIANS AT HIS WEDDING FEAST, I PROPOSE THAT WE NOW PERFORM THE FAR LESS DANGEROUS RITUAL OF THE ROOTS...

FROM THIS ANCESTRAL VASE, THE COUPLE WILL CHOOSE SEEDS IN TURN.

THEY SHALL SOW THEM WHEREVER THEY PLEASE, FIVE FEET APART.

MAY THE PLANTS BE GEOREFERENCED FOR ALL ETERNITY!

ONE DAY, YOUR CHILDREN WILL CONTEMPLATE YOUR TREES OF LIFE, JUST AS YOU CAN ADMIRE THE ONES MONÄ AND I PLANTED OVER THREE DECADES AGO.

AND NOW, LET'S EAT!

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YOU AND SÄTIE SHOULD COME TO TORGHON. I WOULD SO LIKE FOR YOU TO BREATHE THE AIR OF OUR FORESTS AND SWIM IN OUR LAGOONS... BESIDES, YOU'VE ALWAYS DREAMED OF HUNTING THERE, RIGHT?

YOU MEAN, AFTER OUR EXPEDITION TO THE SOLAR SYSTEM?

I DIDN'T WANT TO SPOIL THE MOOD.

ANY NEWS?

THE OPERATION IS GAINING MOMENTUM. YOU FORESTERS WILL BE ON THE FRONT LINES, BUT THE COMPLEX IS PREPARING A LARGE COALITION. SEVERAL DIFFERENT SPECIES WILL FORM THE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE. TORGHON WILL, LOGICALLY, BE INVOLVED IN CONTROLLING THE OCEANS... I HAVEN'T BEEN CALLED.

THERE'S TALK OF SENDING ORIGAMA SQUADRONS. THEIR AIR SUPPORT SHOULD MAKE YOUR WORK EASIER... THE HUMANS HAVE FORMIDABLE WEAPONS.

SO IT'S TRUE. WE'LL HAVE TO LEAVE!

ORIGAMAS! I'VE ALWAYS DREAMT OF HAVING A DRINK WITH A GASEOUS LIFE FORM!

SWÄNN ET SÄTIE, FORESTERS OF CLAN KÄNALÄ, FROM THE PLANET NÄKÄN IN THE ADARA SYSTEM...

IDENTITY ACCEPTED. STATE YOUR REQUEST.

I ALREADY EXPLAINED ALL THIS YESTERDAY...

MY PARTNER AND I EMBARK TONIGHT. WE'LL BE IN THE SAME QUANTUM CRUISER, BUT WE'LL BE TAKING PART IN DIFFERENT OPERATIONS ONCE WE GET ON THE GROUND.

WHAT IS YOUR PROBLEM?

WE'D LIKE TO APPLY FOR FAMILY UNIFICATION AND SERVE IN THE SAME TERRESTRIAL REGION.

I HAVE NO INFORMATION ON THE CONCEPT OF TERRESTRIAL REGIONS...

MY CIVILIZATION CUT BACK ON ALGORITHMS SEVEN CENTURIES AGO. I WANT TO TALK TO A LIVING BEING!

THAT IS IMPOSSIBLE.

FORGET IT, SWÄNN... IT'S TIME.

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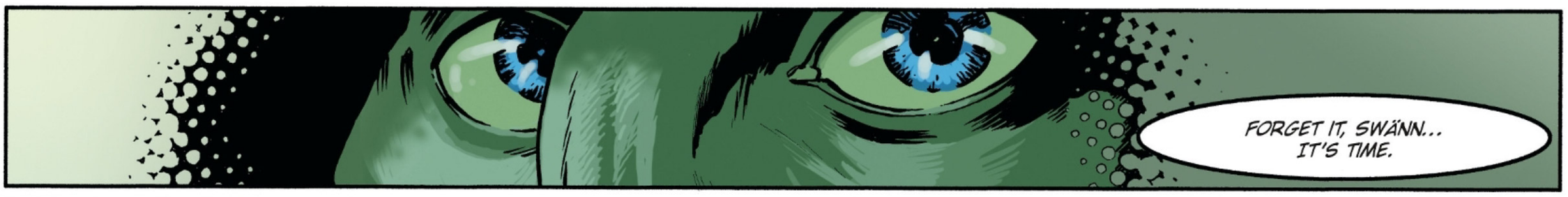
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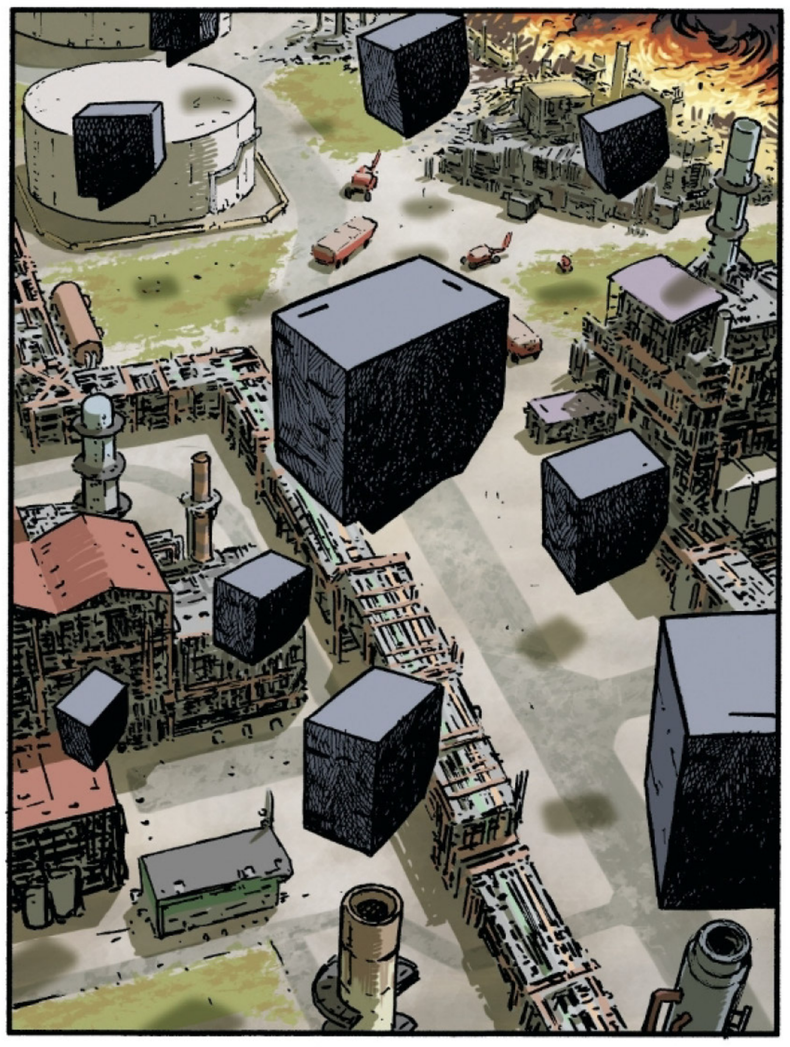
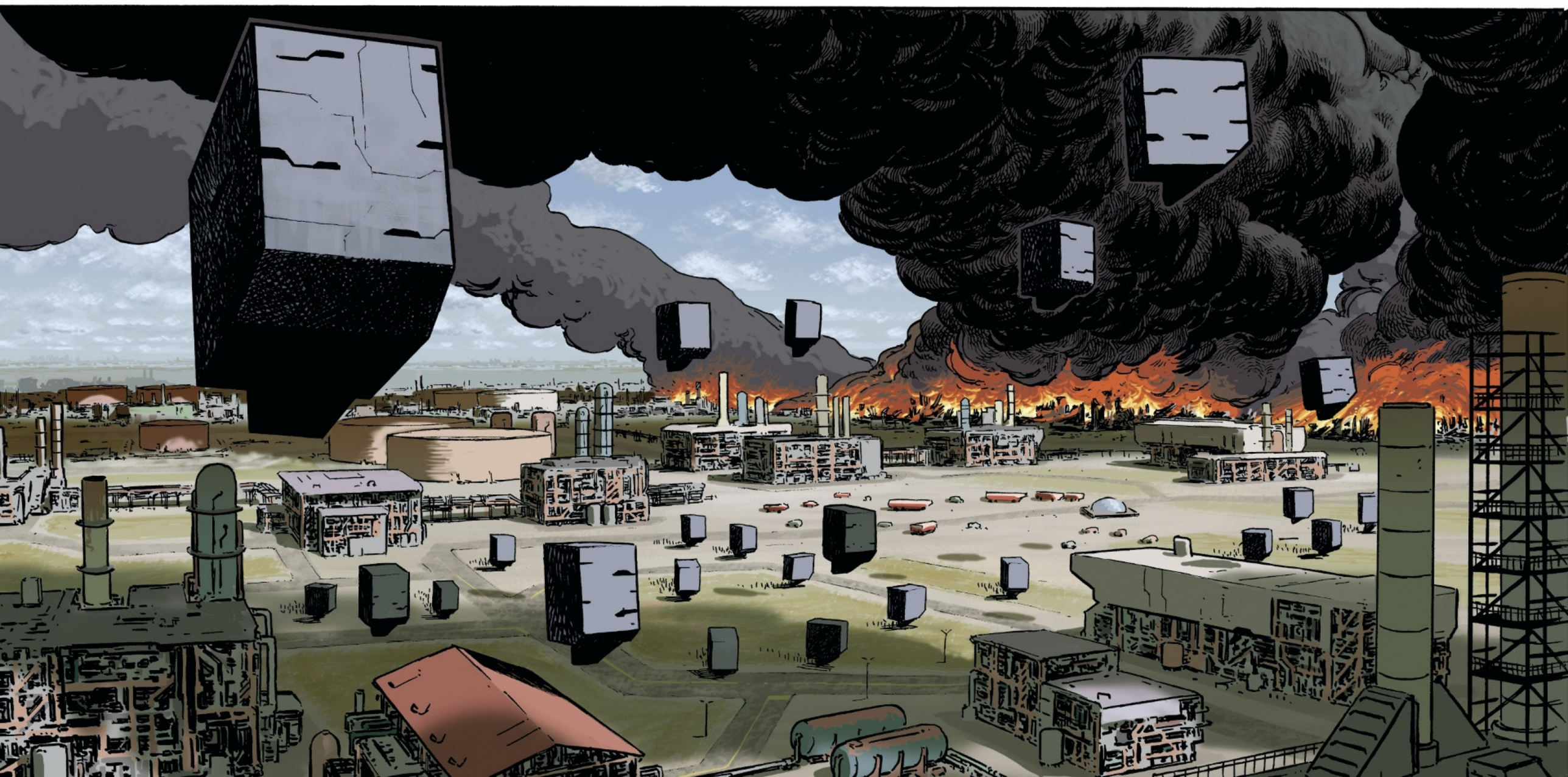
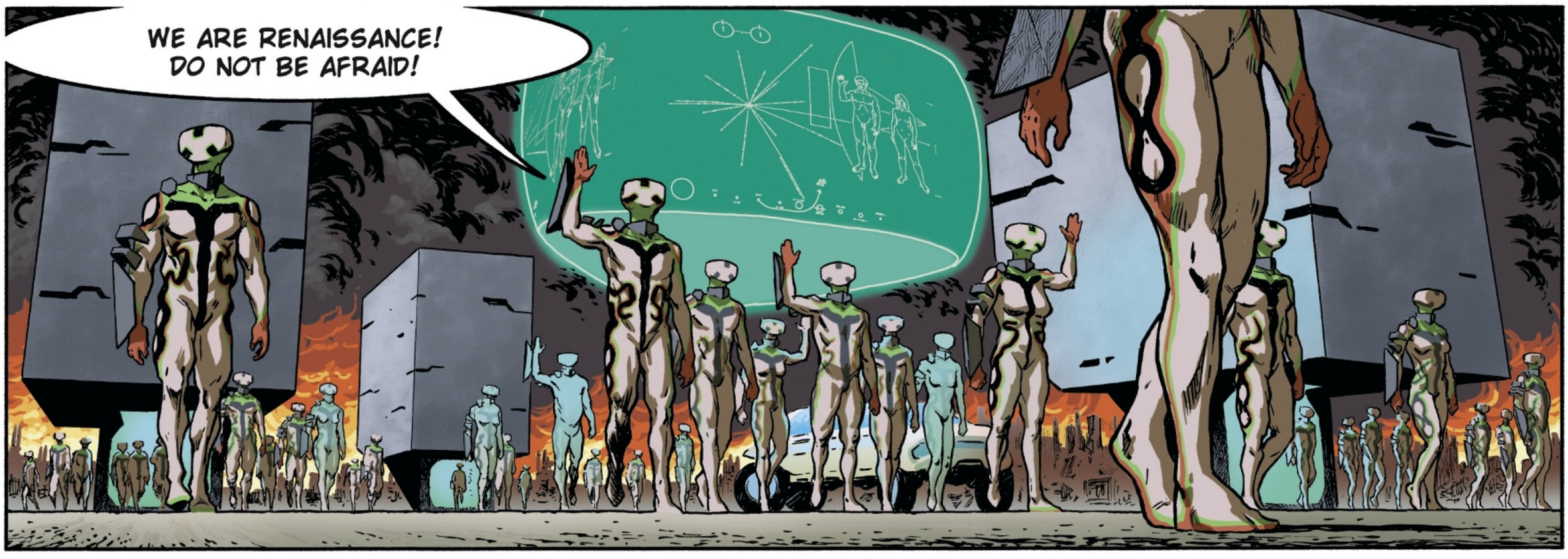
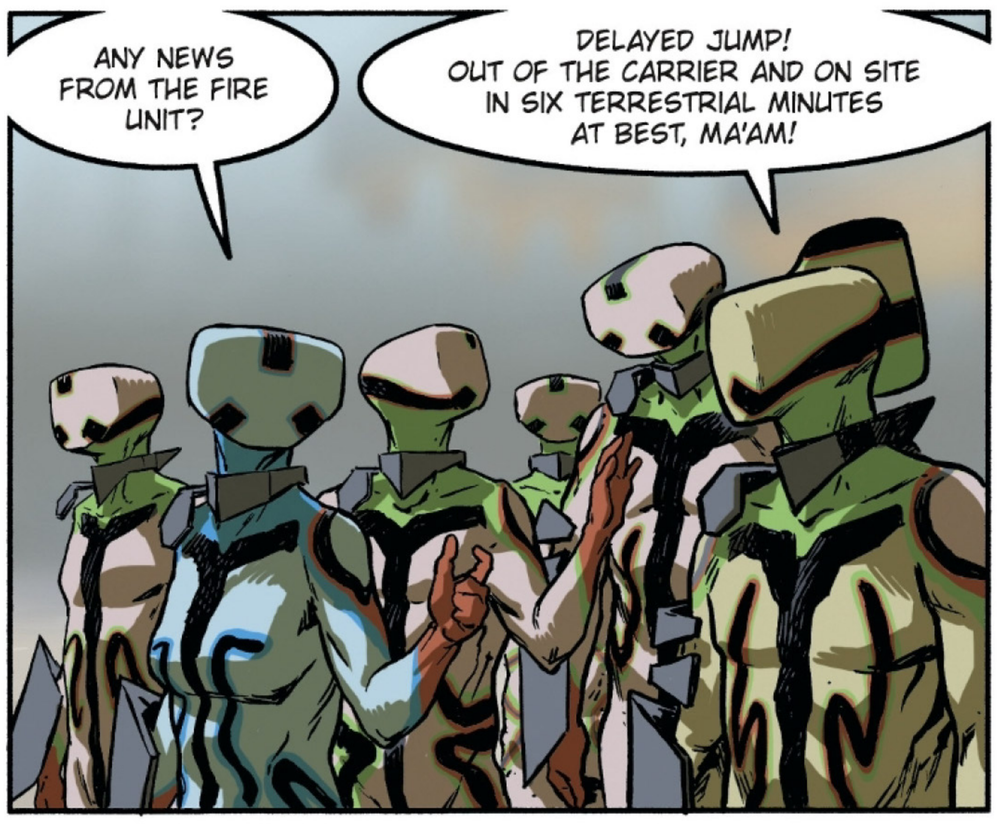





WE ARE RENAISSANCE!
DO NOT BE AFRAID!

SWÄNN, TAKE YOUR UNIT AND MOVE TOWARDS THOSE INHABITED STRUCTURES. WE HAVE TO CALM THIS CROWD BEFORE MOVING THEM AWAY FROM HERE. RELAXANTS ARE AUTHORIZED FROM NOW ON!
YES, MA'AM!


ANY NEWS FROM THE FIRE UNIT?
DELAYED JUMP! OUT OF THE CARRIER AND ON SITE IN SIX TERRESTRIAL MINUTES AT BEST, MA'AM!

WE ARE RENAISSANCE. DO NOT BE AFRAID!

31

LIZ! QUICK, RUN!

DON'T PANIC!
THEY ATTACKED THOSE DAMN TANKS--NOT US!

LOOK: THE PIONEER PLAQUE!
WE'RE THE ONES WHO SENT THAT INTO SPACE MORE THAN A CENTURY AGO!

SO WHAT?

HAHAHA, HAAA...
UHHH... OOOHHH! I... AM... INVULNERABLE! HA!

GENDER: MALE

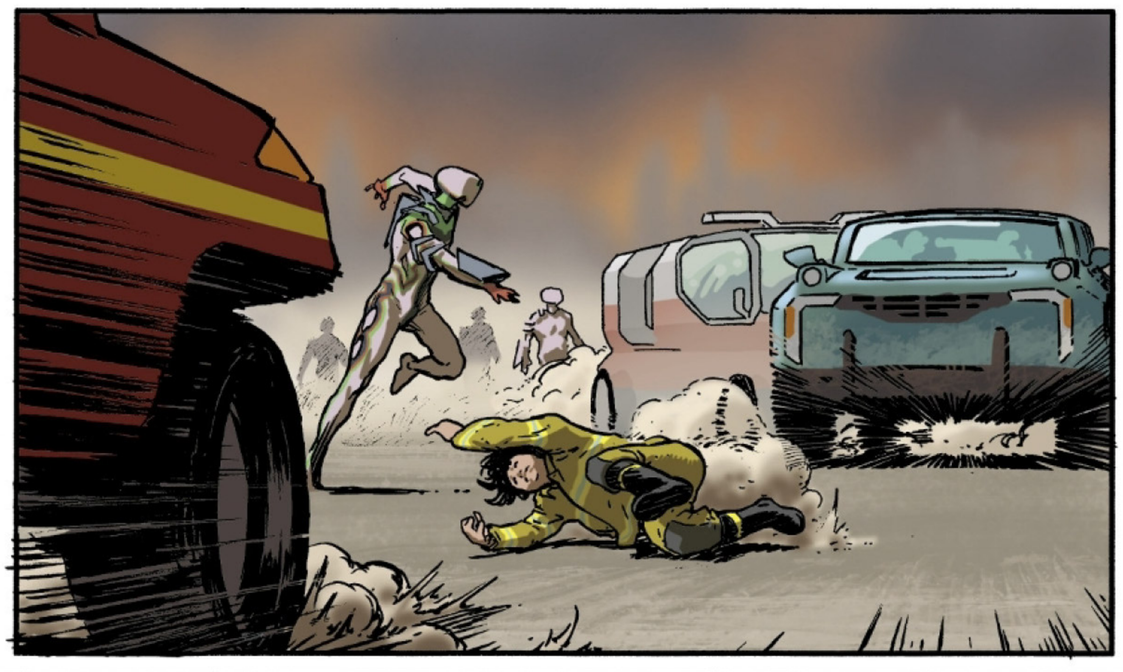
STRESS: 100%

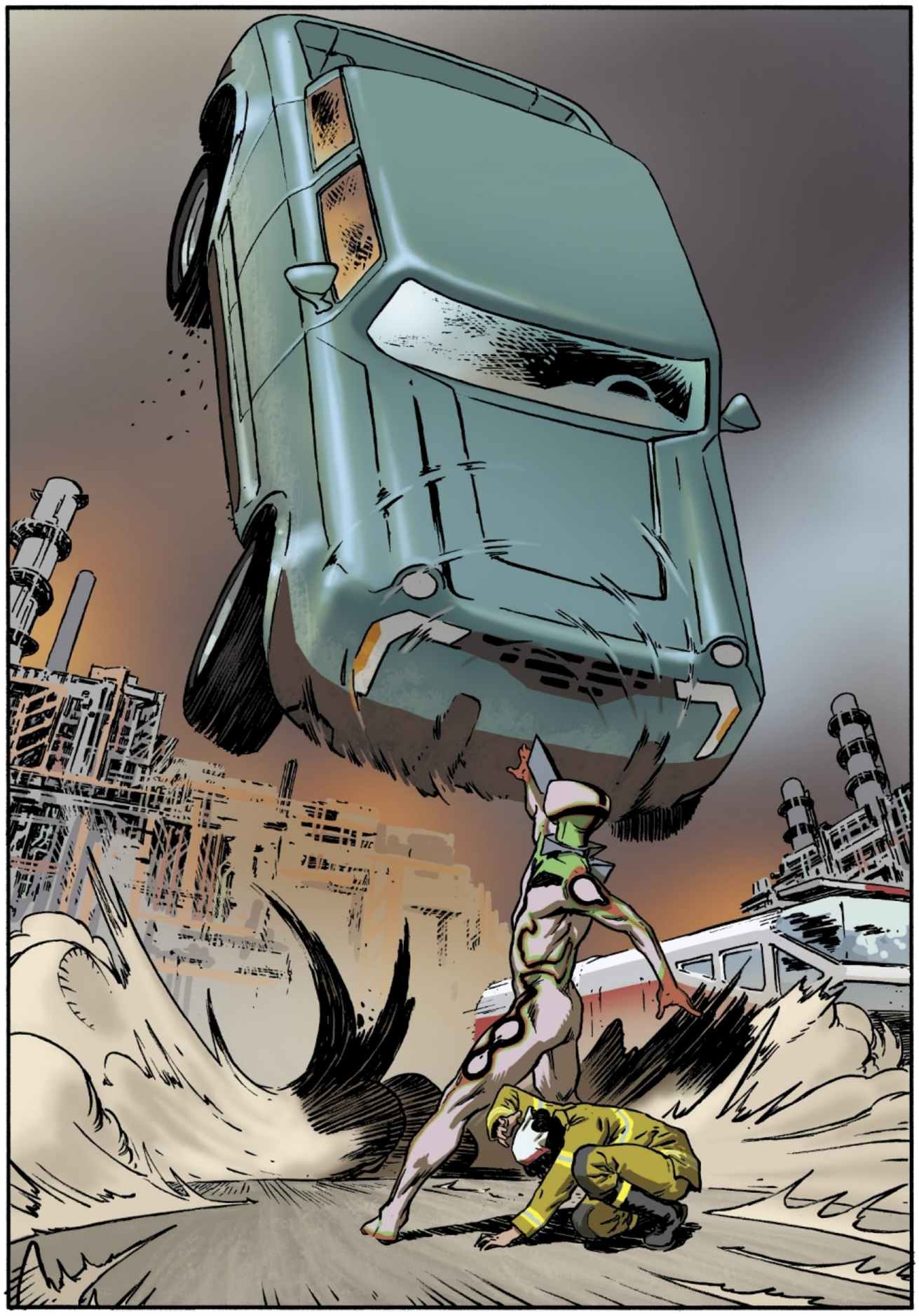
DANGER: 55%

RELAXANT: ADVISED

DOSE: 10%

32





33

WE ARE RENAISSANCE, DO NOT BE AFRAID!

I... I'M NOT SCARED... WHY... WHY HAVE YOU DRUGGED ME?

IT'S JUST A LIGHT RELAXANT. WE'RE GOING TO HELP YOU PUT OUT THE FIRE.

I'M LIZ HAMILTON, I RUN THE FIELD... NOW, BE COOL, AND SHOW ME YOUR FACE!

MY NAME IS SWÄNN. YOUR ANKLE NEEDS TREATMENT. LET ME DO IT!

LIGHT RELAXANT, HUH?! THEN WHY AM I HALLUCINATING??

34

THE THREE THREATENING MACHINES ARE NEUTRALIZED, MA'AM!

PERFECT, BUT THE REAL DANGER IS THE BLAZE, DAMN IT!

THE FIRE UNITS ARE UNLOADING FROM THE CARRIER, MA'AM!

COME ON, LET'S MOVE TOWARDS THE HUMAN VILLAGE! IS THE SITUATION THERE STABLE?

THIS FIRE IS FINALLY GOING TO MEET ITS MATCH!

WE'VE SECURED THE AREA, MA'AM! A FEW SHOTS EXCHANGED--THE PEOPLE IN THIS REGION ARE PARTICULARLY WELL ARMED--BUT NO CASUALTIES AS OF YET!

WE ARE RENAISSANCE, AND WE CAN NOW PROCEED WITH THE NEXT PHASE!

35

RENAISSANCE PARIS. CARRIER 24.

I BE VERY HAPPY TEAMING UP WITH YOU, SÄTIE! THE EARTHLINGS YOU GO MEET ARE MOVE TOWARD THE 4-WEST SUSPENSION BRIDGE!

I'M HAPPY TOO, PABLÖ. THIS IS MY FIRST TIME WORKING WITH A KÖBALT ASSISTANT! I LOVE KÖBALT HUMOR!

YOU KNOWS MY PLANET?

36

I'LL GO ONE DAY FOR A LONG VACATION! MY HUSBAND SWÄNN DREAMS OF IT!

WATCH THE DESCENT, THERE WILL BEING HOLES IN THE AIR!

I KNOW THE BRIDGE MANAGER, HE'S NOT VERY NICE. DO YOU HAVE YOUR I.D., PABLÖ?

THE SUBJECT IS IN ISOLATION, DOCTOR... FEMALE. SHE'S TURNED INTO A SAVAGE BEAST EVER SINCE WE SEPARATED HER FROM HER FAMILY! YOU'D BETTER BE CAREFUL!

WELL, LET'S TAKE A LOOK!

WE IS VERY PREPARE, BOSS!

37

I WANNA SEE MY SON AND HUSBAND!

?!

DO YOU REALLY WANT TO GO IN THERE WITHOUT US TRANQUILIZING HER AT ALL?

NO CHOICE! THE CHARTER IS CLEAR: HER FREE WILL MUST NOT BE COMPROMISED... NOR HER METABOLISM.

AS YOU WISH!

BE YOU CAREFUL, DOCTOR!

38

HELLO, HÉLÈNE. I'M DR. SÄTIE.

YOU'RE STRONG ENOUGH TO REALLY HURT ME, YOU KNOW...

I WANT TO SEE MY SON.

YOUR LOVED ONES ARE NOT IN DANGER, BUT THEY'RE SICK. WE'RE TREATING THEM IN A UNIT NOT FAR FROM HERE.

THE DISEASE THAT YOU CALL "THE FEVER" HAS KILLED MANY PEOPLE IN EUROPE. YOUR REMEDIES ARE USELESS, BECAUSE THIS PARTICULAR VIRUS HAD NEVER BEEN CONTRACTED BY YOUR SPECIES.

BUT YOU'RE NOT SICK... YOU'RE THE ONLY PERSON IN THE EIFFEL TOWER--MAYBE IN ALL OF PARIS--WHO'S IMMUNE.

39

THIS IS CRAZY! NOTHING CAN WITHSTAND THAT KIND OF HEAT!

THE ALLOY IN OUR SHIPS' HULLS CAN, MRS. HAMILTON.

LIZ! PLEASE, CALL ME LIZ...

ALRIGHT, LIZ.

OUR UNITS WILL CONTAIN THE FIRE USING POCKETS OF GAS... IT WILL LIKELY TAKE A FEW WEEKS TO GO OUT COMPLETELY, BUT IT WON'T SPREAD ANY FURTHER.

THEN GROUND TEAMS WILL SEAL OFF THE OIL WELLS...

FOR GOOD?

I DON'T KNOW, LIZ, BUT YOUR PETROLEUM HAS NO FUTURE...

I'M REALLY NOT A FAN OF THIS FEELING THAT SUDDENLY EVERYTHING'S FINE WHILE, DEEP DOWN, I'D LIKE TO LAUNCH YOU BACK TO THE NEAREST STAR!

YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO KEEP 10 BILLION HUMAN BEINGS UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF YOUR LAUGHING GAS FOR LONG. SO WHAT COMES NEXT IN YOUR PLAN?

THE GOAL IS TO AVOID ANY POPULATION MOVEMENT. SO YOU'LL BE ENCOURAGED TO STAY AT HOME. FOOD AND WATER SUPPLIES WILL BE ORGANIZED WHILE WE WAIT FOR A POLITICAL SOLUTION...

40

YOU... YOU'VE LAUNCHED A GLOBAL INVASION?

"INVASION" ISN'T THE RIGHT WORD: WE'RE PACIFISTS. YOUR SPECIES WAS DOOMED. THAT'S WHAT I WAS TOLD, ANYWAY...

GREAT! NOW THAT WE'RE SAVED, YOU CAN LET ME GO FIND MY HUSBAND AND DAUGHTERS!

FIGHTERS FROM THE U.S. ARMY! THEY'RE ARMED WITH NUCLEAR WARHEADS!

SHIP UNDER THREAT. PREVENTIVE FIRE AUTHORIZED.

PACIFISTS, HUH?!

REAL PEACEFUL HOW YOU BLEW UP THOSE PLANES. HELL, I'D GIVE YOU THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE!

THE CARRIER MERELY DEFENDED ITSELF.

WHAT IS A "CARRIER," ACTUALLY?

SO KIND OF LIKE A GIANT 3D PRINTER!

A SHIP THAT CREATES THE MATERIAL RENAISSANCE NEEDS IN REAL TIME...

IF YOU LIKE.

41

WHO ARE YOU? WHAT ARE YOU?

WE ARE RENAISSANCE. WE WERE SENT TO YOUR PLANET BY THE COMPLEX. IT'S EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT YOU LET ME TAKE A SAMPLE OF YOUR BLOOD...

AS IF YOU NEEDED MY PERMISSION!

YOUR FEAR IS CONTROLLING YOU. I DO NEED YOUR PERMISSION. IT'S A MATTER OF JUSTICE AND MORALS, DON'T YOU THINK?

JUSTICE AND MORALS, YEAH. I HEARD OF THOSE WHEN I WAS A KID... ANCIENT HISTORY BY NOW, MIGHT AS WELL BE A LEGEND...

HER FEAR FEED HER ANGER. SÄTIE IS BE IN DANGER!

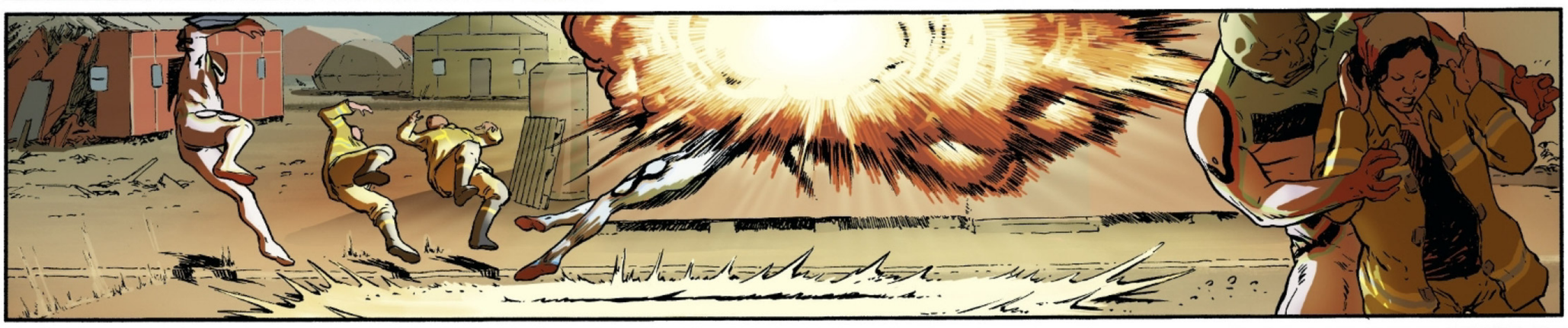
BACK HOME, WE HUNT THESE SORTS OF BEASTS DURING THE POD SEASON AND STEW THEM TO SHARE WITH THE NEIGHBORS!

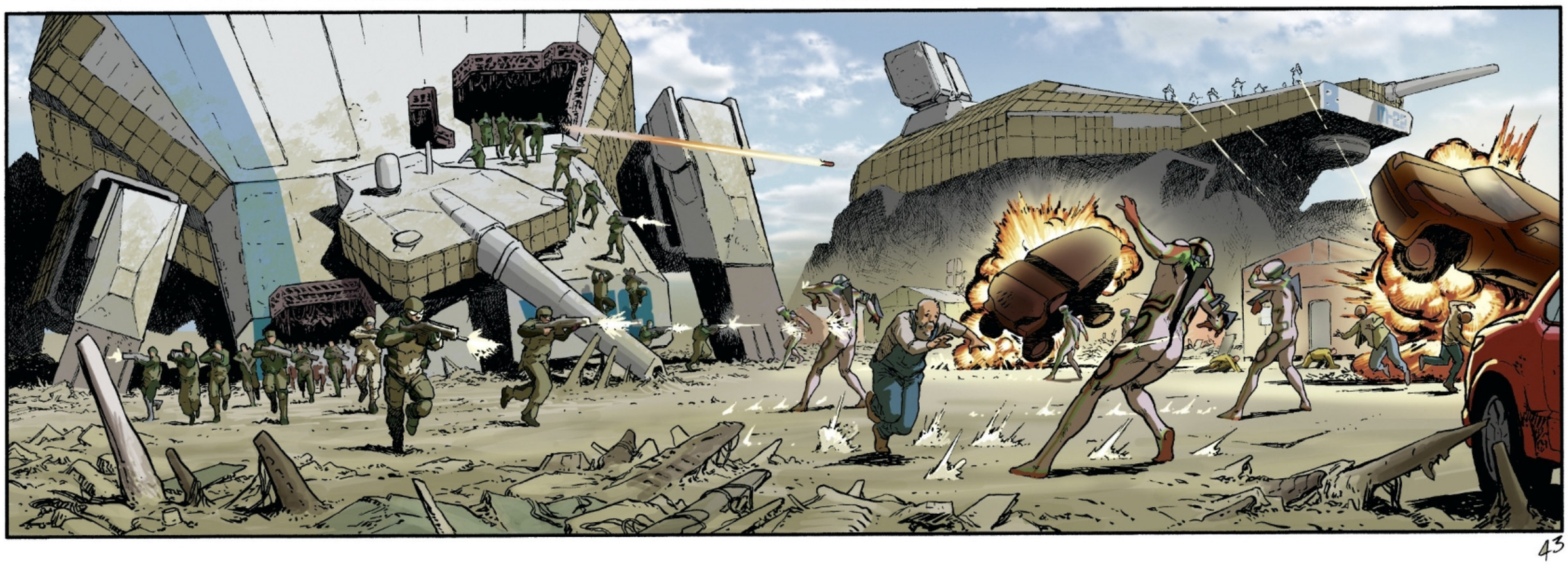
MY HUSBAND AND SON... I WANT TO SEE THEM.

42

DON'T TOUCH ME, TRASH!
YOU HEAR ME?
ARGGGG!!!

NO VIOLENCE.
USE THE RELAXANTS!





43

ARE THEY YOURS?

NO!

NORTHERN FEDERALISTS! THEY'LL GIVE NO QUARTER!

UNEXPECTED ATTACK!

FIRE!

44

HUMAN HOSTILES ARMED AND IN GREAT NUMBER! SEND REINFORCEMENTS!

JUST INCREASE THE DOSAGE TO 30%!

BUT THEY HAVE ARMOR! THEY'RE KILLING US! WE HAVE 18 CASUALTIES!

CONTROL YOUR EMOTIONS!

REINFORCEMENTS WILL ARRIVE IN THREE MINUTES! CONTROL YOUR EMOTIONS!

LIZ, DON'T LOOK!

LEAVE ME ALONE!

OUR MISSION IS THE PRESERVATION OF SENTIENT BEINGS!

YOU'RE LOSING CONTROL!

MY BLOOD IS YOURS!

VERY GOOD, MY LABORATORY IS IN MY SHIP!

HÉLÈNE, YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT I'M NOT JUST A DOCTOR. I'VE BEEN TASKED WITH INVESTIGATING THIS FEVER, WHICH MEANS I CAN LEGALLY ASK YOU ABOUT IT.

GREAT!

I HAVE A QUESTION: HOW DO YOU KNOW I'M NOT SICK IF YOU HAVEN'T DRAWN MY BLOOD YET?

ALL RESCUED HUMANS HAVE BEEN SYSTEMATICALLY SCANNED. THAT'S HOW WE DETECTED THE FEVER AND ISOLATED THE SICK. BUT WE DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO DRAW YOUR BLOOD WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT.

WHEN WE GOT BACK TO PARIS THREE WEEKS AGO, NOBODY WAS TALKING ABOUT THE FEVER... BUT IN THE VILLAGE WE'D COME FROM, THREE PEOPLE HAD DIED...

I... DO YOU THINK WE BROUGHT THE FEVER TO THE TOWER?

THIS VILLAGE, IS IT FAR? COULD YOU LEAD ME THERE?

IT'S IN NORMANDY... A FEW HOURS AWAY BY BOAT. IT SHOULD BE A LOT FASTER WITH YOUR SHIP THINGY.

46

367 DEAD EARTHLINGS, OF WHICH 19 CIVILIANS! 28 OF OUR OWN DEAD! THIS LANDING IS A DISASTER! THE FORESTERS HAVE BECOME KILLERS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE! IT'S SHAMEFUL! YOU HEAR?

WHO CAN EXPLAIN THIS FIASCO AND TELL ME WHAT LED TO THE MASSACRE?

SWÄNN?

THERE ARE WORDS, AND THEN THERE ARE THINGS LIKE PERFORATING BULLETS THAT TAKE LIVES, SIR... WAR ISN'T PRETTY, AND RENAISSANCE IS CONFRONTING THAT BITTER TRUTH YET AGAIN...

PHILOSOPHIZING WON'T SAVE THE FORESTERS' REPUTATION, SWÄNN... LET'S CONTINUE OUR MISSION. BUT KNOW THAT AN ETHICS INVESTIGATION HAS BEEN OPENED.

OTHER OPINIONS?

47

THE FIRES ARE MORE STUBBORN THAN EXPECTED. THE OFFICER LEADING OPERATIONS ON THE GROUND WANTS TO MEET YOU IN THE MORNING, MRS. HAMILTON.

IN THE MEANTIME, MY JOB IS TO WATCH OVER YOU.

YOU SHOULD EAT SOMETHING.

I DON'T TRUST YOU, BUT THANKS FOR TRYING TO BE A NICE GUARD... I'M NOT HUNGRY!

YOUR FEAR HAS FADED. THAT'S GOOD. BUT I STILL SENSE WORRY IN YOU. IT'S WEAKENING YOU...

I CAN'T REACH MY HUSBAND AND DAUGHTERS, OK?! I CAN LOCATE THE SIGNAL FROM THEIR VEHICLE, BUT THEY'RE NOT ANSWERING... SO, YES, I'M A LITTLE BIT STRESSED!

THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO TAKE A SHIP TONIGHT FROM CORPUS CHRISTI. SOUTH AMERICA WAS STILL A GOOD OPTION YESTERDAY...

COME WITH ME!

GIVE ME YOUR TELEPHONE.

IF THE SIGNAL DOES CORRESPOND TO THEIR VEHICLE, OUR OBSERVATION SYSTEM WILL FIND THEM, EVEN IN STEALTH MODE.

THAT'S OUR CAR! IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S FLOATING!

I'LL EXTRAPOLATE FROM FIELD SURVEYS AND GET A VIEW FROM THE GROUND.

WHAT THE HELL?! EL CAPITAN ISN'T ON THE WAY TO CORPUS CHRISTI!

SORRY, LIZ, NO TRACE OF HUMAN LIFE WITHIN A 5 KM RADIUS...

IF YOUR MEETING WITH THE FIELD OFFICER GOES WELL TOMORROW, HE'LL AGREE TO SEND A TEAM TO LOOK FOR THEM. IN THE MEANTIME, YOU HAVE TO PROMISE ME YOU'LL STAY HERE ON YOUR BEST BEHAVIOR. I DON'T WANT TO FORCE YOU OR DRUG YOU... OUR RELATIONSHIP MUST BE BUILT ON MUTUAL TRUST.

YOU HAVE MY WORD.

49

WE REACHES THE VILLAGE IN NORMANDY IN 12 MINUTES. I HOPES YOU NOT DISTURB BY THE STRANGE SPEED, HÉLÈNE!

THERE'S A PROBLEM WITH YOUR TRANSLATOR, BLUE!

SORRY? YOU BE SURE?

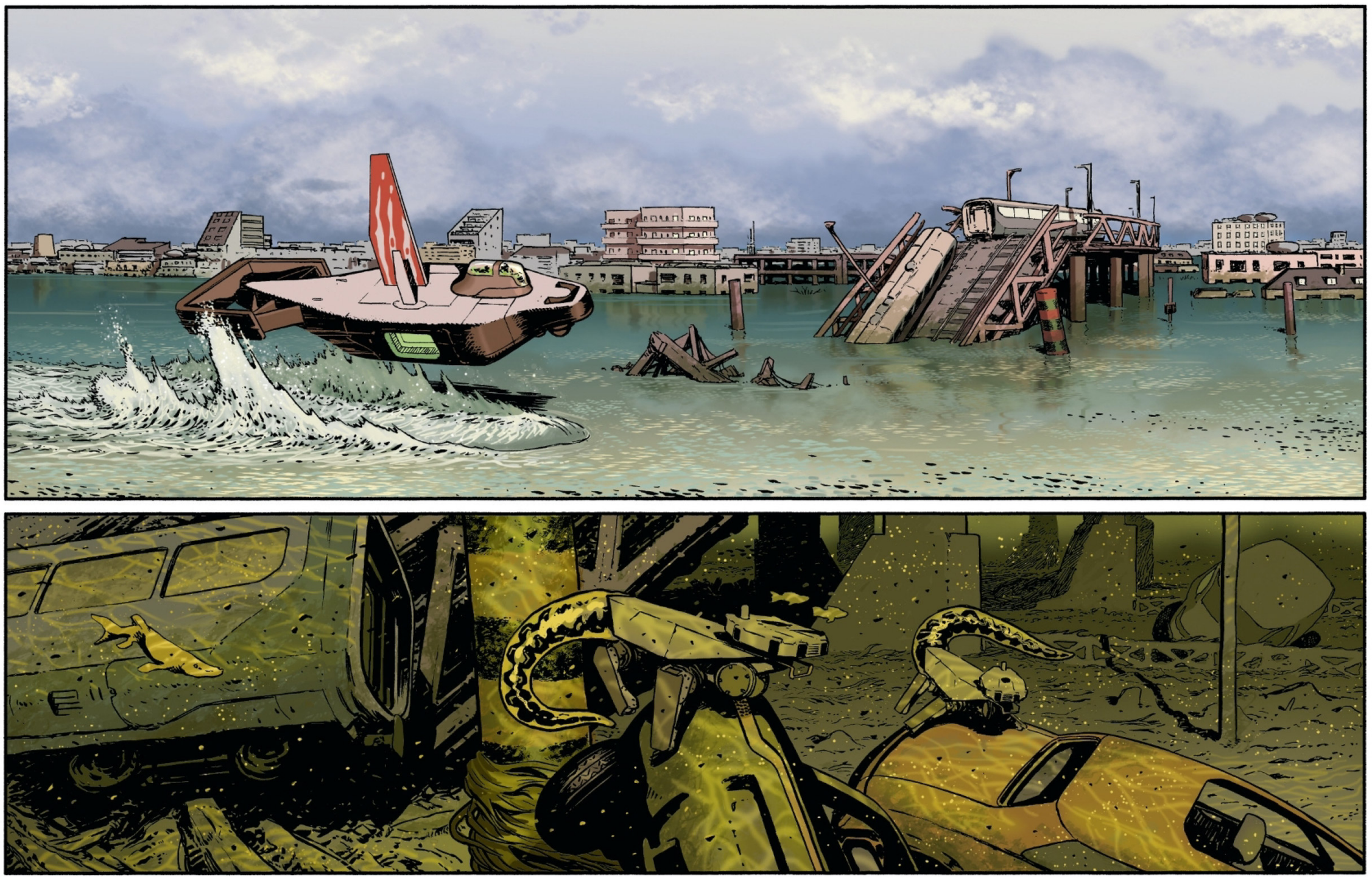
VERY! YOUR VERBS ARE ALL WRONG. IT MAKES YOU SOUND LIKE SOME KIND OF TRAINED MONKEY COMPARED TO DR. SÄTIE.

IT ARE HUMILIATING!

IT ARE TRUE!

ALRIGHT, WE'LL GET PABLÖ'S IMPLANTS EXAMINED LATER! I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT BESIDES A SLIGHT IRON DEFICIENCY, YOU'RE NOT SICK, HÉLÈNE! I'M GOING TO NEED TO FIND OUT WHY!

50


UNITS 357 AND 526.
TARGET ACQUIRED,
LIKELY DESTINATION:
THE VEXIN PLATEAU.
NEW BIOLOGICAL INTELLIGENCE
A GREATER THREAT THAN HUMANS.
REINFORCEMENTS TO BE DISTRIBUTED
BEFORE ATTACK.
51

LIZ?

LIZ?

LIZ!!!

SWANN

I LIED
I'M SORRY

52

DAMN IT, SWÄNN, HOW COULD YOU HAVE TRUSTED HER?

THE BRIEFINGS WERE VERY CLEAR: HUMANS LIE! TO EACH OTHER AND TO THEMSELVES!

I NEED TO SPEAK WITH HAMILTON BEFORE I CAN SEND MY GUYS INTO THE WELLS... DO YOU KNOW WHERE TO LOOK FOR HER?

YES, SIR. I THINK SHE'S HEADED WEST IN SEARCH OF HER FAMILY...

I'M ORDERING YOU A GLIDER. PICK IT UP AT CUBES 35-45!

BRING LIZ HAMILTON BACK... BY FORCE IF NECESSARY!

THREE HOURS MIGHT NOT BE ENOUGH, SIR!

I DON'T CARE. FIGURE IT OUT!

53

DAMN IT, YURI! PLEASE PICK UP!

SORRY, LIZ, YOUR CONTACT HAS DISACTIVATED HIS COM. I CAN SCHEDULE AN AUTOMATIC CALL EVERY 15 MINUTES IF YOU WISH.

TEXAKO

A GLIDER, RIGHT NOW? GLIDERS ARE PLANNED FOR TOMORROW! WE'RE DOING FIRE TRUCK PRODUCTION RIGHT NOW...

WITH ONE OF OUR CARRIERS LEAVING FOR ALBUQUERQUE, WE HAVE A BIT OF A BACKLOG ON GROUND UNITS... BUT LET'S SEE WHAT WE CAN DO!

CAN YOU MAKE ME A GLIDER IN BETWEEN TRUCKS? THIS YOUNG FELLOW'S FROM KÄNALÄ, HE'S A GOOD KID!

PFFF! FINE... TWENTY MINUTES, DOES THAT WORK?

THAT'S GREAT, GUYS, THANKS!

COMM: SÄTIE.

CALL FROM SWÄNN.

SWÄNN, I MISS YOU SO MUCH!

I MISS YOU TOO, SÄTIE...

GO ON, TELL ME... HOW HAS YOUR FIRST DAY BEEN?

55

SHEE-IT! THOSE FILTHY ALIENS CAME TO EXTERMINATE US. I'M SURE OF IT!

WE BETTER GET SOME CASH FAST THEN.

PREY APPROACHING!

DON'T DAMAGE THE CAR!

TO BE CONTINUED...

A very big thanks to Fred Duval for giving me the opportunity to bring this exciting story to life.
And an equally big thanks to Fred Blanchard for letting us soak up some of his creativity.
My thanks also to the team at Dargaud.
And a special thanks to my daughters, my eagle-eyed first readers.

EMEM

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